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OPINION METER
This week's poll:

Do you know what Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution is about?

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NATION

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Band's 'Keep A Flame Tree Alive' fundraiser kicks off. PAGE 16

Kaipat, 21, killed in Afghanistan

Flags are at half-staff in front of the Legislature on Capital Hill yesterday in honor of the late U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal Ramon Taisakan Kaipat, left, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on Wednesday. The flags were restored to normal by the Office of the Governor, which is the only one with the authority to order flags at half-staff on certain occasions.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

A 21-year-old Marine from the CNMI was killed while on combat patrol in Afghanistan on Wednesday, bringing to 16 the number of Commonwealth sons and daughters who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the wars against terror since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal Ramon Taisakan Kaipat, born and raised on Saipan, died as a result of "multiple injuries" from an improvised explosive device during combat operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

He was a member of a dismounted patrol that was

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Manglona's running mate on Rota is Felix Santos

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), left, introduces his running mate, Felix M. Santos, right, who is challenging his first cousin, incumbent Rep. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota).

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) introduced yesterday his running mate, former Department of Public Safety-Rota resident director Felix Mundo Santos.

Santos, an independent, declared his candidacy for House of Representatives member for Rota.

"I run for the people of Rota. I hate seeing the peo-

See MANGLONA on Page 4

Afternoon blaze hits Islander Club

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A fire of unknown cause struck the Islander Club located behind Gold Beach Hotel on Pupulu Drive in Garapan yesterday afternoon.

No one was reported injured in the blaze as the club was closed when the fire broke out, firefighters and witnesses told *Saipan Tribune* at the scene.

Firefighters quickly responded and prevented the blaze from spreading to other parts of the club and to the adjacent apartments.

The club's owner, Maria Castro, was seen talking on her cell phone about 3:30pm a few meters away from the establishment as firefighters and arson investigators were going in and out of the club.

At the time, firefighters had already stamped out the blaze. The flames had engulfed the interior of the club on a one-story concrete building.

Roy Matagolai, 35, manager of Islander Club, said the bar would

See BLAZE on Page 4

Local

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Tinian mayor questions continued delay in completion of terminal

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Ramon M. Dela Cruz is questioning the continued delay in the completion of the Tinian West Field International Airport Departure Terminal, expressing disappointment in the series of setbacks that have delayed the project.

In a letter to Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero, Dela Cruz said that he is "disappointed" upon learning that the bid for a contract to complete the construction of the departure terminal has been cancelled again.

Dela Cruz pointed out in a phone interview yesterday that the Tinian municipality is "never informed" about each cancellation and the reasons for it, adding that they have to find out about it through "third parties."

"I want to find out the details as to why [CPA] cancelled this and if they did for technical reasons or for whatever reason, I would like to be informed as to when CPA plans to proceed with its final completion," Dela Cruz said.

It was in February 2005 when then-governor Juan N. Babauta led the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the new departure terminal, touted as a great step toward the economic development of the island and the entire Commonwealth.

"Here it is seven years later and the facility is still not operational," Dela Cruz said in his April 11 letter to Guerrero. "Would you please advise me and the people of Tinian as to when you think the departure terminal will actually be completed and opened for use?"

Dela Cruz said that he is "anxious" to find out what's causing the delay the completion of the departure terminal.

"The elected officials of the municipal government should be informed as to why and when do they expect to start it again because we're depending on this," said the mayor.

According to Dela Cruz, the departure terminal would allow the island to bring charter flights directly from China.

"Ever since the [Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino] broke ground, we knew that the only way the hotel-casino industry could be successful on Tinian was by having direct flights from China to Tinian," he said.

Dela Cruz said he was also told that even the U.S. military troops that would conduct military exercises on their leased lands would like to use the departure terminal but its noncompletion and an ongoing lawsuit against its design contractor restricts the use of the structure.

CPA sued Texas-based firm Leo A. Daly Co. last year for allegedly defective designs of the Tinian Airport's departure terminal and the departure area of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

Leo A. Daly Co. was the same firm contracted to design the dialysis center of the Commonwealth Health Center. The CNMI government filed a $10 million lawsuit against the firm, which settled the case for $2 million.

"Sad to say, we're involved again in the same fiasco, the same problem: defective design by an A&E firm," said Dela Cruz.

"The [departure terminal] design was defective and as a result of that, it has pretty much put in question the integrity of the structure of the building," he added.

According to Dela Cruz, CPA is "working hard" to settle the case but he does not know "if there's an actual settlement."

The mayor said his office and the CPA should "work together" given that they are "under the same government."

"Tinian can provide more revenues for the general fund; however, we need the airport to be fully operational. Please help us help the Commonwealth," said Dela Cruz.

Bolis: We need better representation in Congress

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Despite declining the Republican Party's nomination to run as delegate on Wednesday night, John Oliver "Bolis" Gonzales believes that the CNMI needs "better" representation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Gonzales, the executive director of Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, said he declined the GOP nomination "for personal reasons."

Gonzales

"There are a lot of pressing issues I have to attend to," Bolis told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that he's not closing his doors to politics and said he leaves it all up to God.

He echoed Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's statement that some 73 percent of the current CNMI voters are between the ages of 18 to 35.

"A new generation of voters will vote for people who have unblemished record," he added.

Gonzales finished third in a nine-way delegate race in 2008, the first time the CNMI held an election for delegate.

Gonzales was invited to attend the GOP meeting at the governor's private residence in Gualo Rai on Wednesday night, but he couldn't make it and sent a one-page letter instead to the governor.

Ramon Salas, GOP treasurer, said those who attended the meeting were hoping that Gonzales would reconsider his decision.

"We were surprised by his decision, but we respect it. He said he didn't accept it because of personal reasons. A lot of people were there that night, even those from Rota," Salas said.

Salas said the GOP committee may have a new nominee by next week.

Gonzales also said he's stepping down as vice campaign manager for Saipan senatorial candidate Illuminanda "Lumi" Bermudes.

Bermudes, in a separate interview last night, said she respects the decision of Gonzales, her close friend. Bermudes said her new campaign manager is Dr. Jessica Taylor. Bermudes' first campaign manager, Kimo Rosario, stepped down a few days ago.

So far, Sablan is the only one running for delegate. He is seeking a third term.

Sablan, an independent aligned with Democrats in Congress, has been endorsed by the CNMI Covenant Party and the so-called Independent Republicans.

Fitial, now chairman of the Republican Party in the CNMI, wants Sablan to be replaced with a Republican.

Funding constraint bars PSS from hiring more bus drivers

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Public School System may experience the same, if not more challenges, in the operation of its pupil transportation department next school year due to a projected tight budget situation.

Jack Diaz, PSS Federal Transportation Administration program manager, disclosed to *Saipan Tribune* that there are only 17 drivers operating the 24 school buses for Saipan public schools.

These 17 drivers are separate from the two personnel needed for each mini-van for the special education program. PSS has eight vans and is required by law to have a driver and a conductor at all times.

According to Diaz, as much as the system wants to hire more people for the bus department, it cannot do so because of the lack of budget. Delays encountered each day, he said, are mainly cause by the double or multiple routes performed by their bus drivers.

Diaz believes that 17 drivers are not enough to ensure the smooth flow of transporting thousands of students to and from school campuses. "Our main problem is the funding. We cannot hire additional or enough number of drivers because our budget is really tight. And we cannot use any portion of FTA grants for personnel because these monies are strictly for certain purposes," he said.

He believes that PSS needs at least 24 drivers.

PSS has a current budget of $30 million for its personnel and operation. The same funding level is recommended by Gov. Benigno Fitial for PSS next fiscal year 2013.

Besides the lack of funds for recruitment and hiring, Diaz revealed that another challenge awaiting the department is how it can maintain these vehicles as well as the newly built bus depot.

Saipan Tribune learned that of the 24 buses on Saipan, three are not operational due to some "legal issues" with manufacturers. Rota and Tinian each has one bus that is also non-functioning due to some problems.

Starting this fiscal year, PSS can no longer directly apply and receive grants from the Federal Transportation Administration after the Executive Branch created the Commonwealth Office of Public Transit Authority.

Fitial OKs $3.2M in poker money for Saipan

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed Wednesday a local bill appropriating over $3.2 million in poker money for Saipan scholarship and other programs for fiscal year 2012, a day after he vetoed a local bill giving $30,000 in poker license fees for Rota dialysis patients, scholars and other programs.

In Fitial's veto message, he said House Local Bill 17-73 is "admirable and appropriate" but he finds "objectionable" the creation of a compliance board, which he described as "a new layer of bureaucracy" in the Rota mayor's office.

A day later, Fitial signed Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan) and House Speaker Eli Cabrera's (R-Saipan) House Local Bill 17-68, Draft 3 into Saipan Local Law 17-14.

That's less than two weeks since the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation passed it.

Under the new Saipan local law, $3 million of the total $3,228,050 will go toward the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance. ***(Haidee V. Eugenio)***

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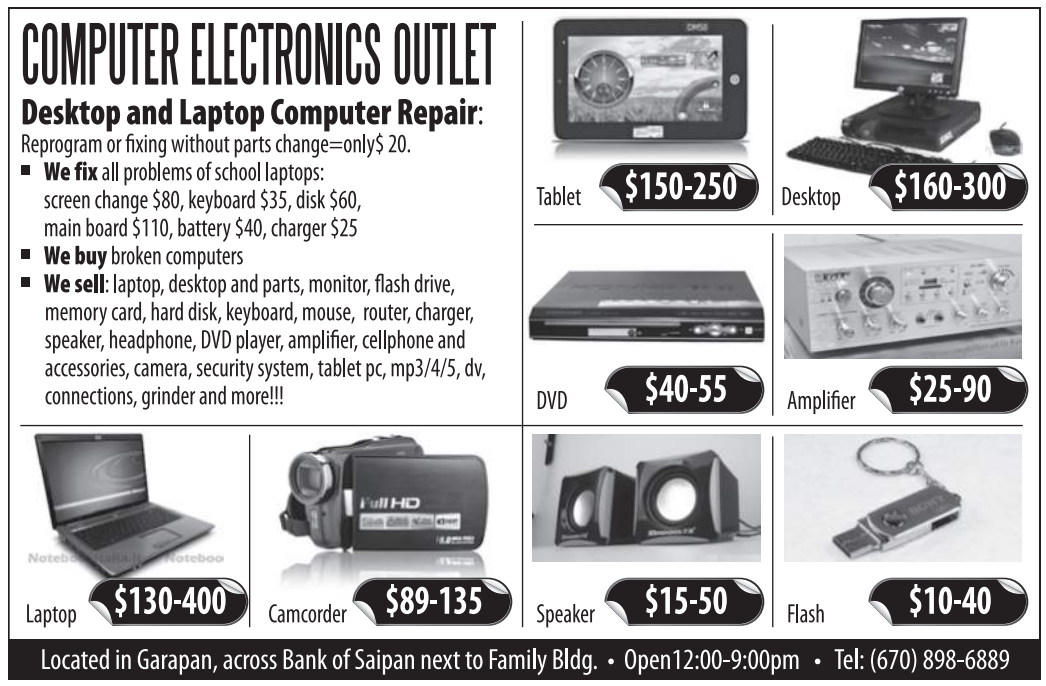
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Thailand's "Songkran" New Year
To celebrate this occasion, Spicy Thai is going to have a "New Year's Party" starting at 4:00pm, Friday afternoon, ending sometime around 10:00pm, Friday evening.
What to bring: An appetite, a sense of humor, and a water pistol of your choice.
Dress: Something you don't mind getting wet.
Note: Inside the restaurant is off limits to water activities, however, outside seating area has no rules.
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Fund forms Pension Holding Corporation

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund formed and opened this week a company called Pension Holding Corp., one of the actions it is taking in connection with the latest Superior Court order.

Saipan Tribune learned that Pension Holding Corp. got its certificate of incorporation from the Department of Commerce on Wednesday, April 11.

Fund administrator Richard Villagomez is listed as the corporation's president while the pension agency's legal counsel, Christopher Timmons, is its vice president. Serving as the corporation's secretary is legal counsel Carolyn Kern while Ellsbeth Alepuyo is listed as the local agent.

The corporation's board of directors is composed of Adelina Roberto and Marian Tudela, both incumbent members of the Fund board of trustees.

The newly-established entity's official address is the NMI Retirement Fund building on Capital Hill.

Villagomez said yesterday that the Fund formed the corporation earlier this week "in response to Judge [Kenneth] Govendo's latest order. It is one of the things we are doing in response to that order."

Villagomez refused to elaborate when pressed about the objective of the new corporation.

Govendo issued an order on March 19 that listed 14 recommendations to solve the pension plan's crisis. These include forming a task force that will come up with a concrete solution within 120 days; floating a bond and reducing pensions by 10 percent to pay the bond; using 100 percent of the tax rebate to pay into the Fund; and eliminating gross receipts tax, implementing a sales tax, and remitting 100 percent of the sales tax to the Fund.

Other recommendations are implementing a value-added tax and having a maximum threshold for pension benefits. Another recommendation is to appoint a receiver for the Fund.

BOE panel endorses PSS' whistleblower policy

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The fiscal and personnel affairs committee of the Board of Education has endorsed a whistleblower policy for Public School System employees.

Committee chair Denise Tanya King said the panel's decision was reached during yesterday's meeting. The committee will formally recommend the policy to the full board when it meets next week.

The board was prompted early this year to develop a policy on whistleblowers after member Galvin Deleon Guerrero raised concerns about the ability of PSS employees to come forward with complaints and allegations about inappropriate practices within the school system.

In an earlier interview with *Saipan Tribune*, Deleon Guerrero said he believes that PSS needs policies and procedures that can protect employees. Such policies, he added, will help hold the school system accountable and prevent any climate of fear from emerging within the system. The issue becomes even more "problematic" if the complaint or allegation pertains to an employee's supervisor where retaliation is feared by affected employees, he added.

King told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the committee's approval is in conjunction with existing personnel policy in place for PSS employees. She said a provision under the system's grievance policy and procedures indicates that employees are allowed to "anonymously" express their concerns. She said no new policy will be created entitling "anonymous" tipsters to come forward and report wrongdoings.

MANGLONA

From Page 1

ple of Rota being neglected. One big issue is that the current congresswoman from Rota, who is associated with the governor, didn't prevent the governor from cutting Rota's budget for 2013," Santos told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview yesterday afternoon.

Felix Santos is the first cousin of incumbent Rep. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota), who is running with Victor Hocog opposite Manglona in the Rota senatorial race.

Teresita Santos and Hocog are running under Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's Republican Party. Fitial and Manglona have been engaged in a word war since the governor described Rota and Tinian senators "stupid" for rejecting a House bill legalizing casino gaming on Saipan.

Since then, Fitial as GOP chairman has taken a more active role in endorsing Hocog and Teresita Santos's campaign on Rota.

Felix Santos, who worked for 22 years with DPS-Rota, also said he has a professional background that places prime importance on "teamwork."

"I am an expert in teamwork, which will only have good results. The congresswoman is not working with the Rota mayor," the father of four said.

In a separate statement, Felix Santos said that Teresita Santos has "failed the people of Rota" and that in the three years the lawmaker has been in office, she was "nonperforming," particularly her "failure to support the goals and objectives of Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola and the Rota Legislative Delegation."

He also took a swipe at what he describes as the House member's flip-flopping stance, criticizing her decision to support Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, who just recently recommended the slashing of the municipality's annual budget for the new fiscal year.

"Where is Terry [Santos] here when the governor recommended a budget cut for Rota? If she is fighting for us, she should not succumbed to the governor's desire to take away the money that the people of Rota rightly deserves," Santos said.

Rep. Santos is running with Victor Hocog, who in the 2007 mid-term elections defeated the former DPS resident director by a small margin for the House race. Hocog, on the other hand, is challenging Manglona for the Senate seat. Hocog lost heavily to Melchor Mendiola in the mayoral race in the last general elections.

"I am ready to stand up for the people of Rota," Santos said, touting a "vision that can help revive the economy, mainly help address issues surrounding the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and the rising fuel prices."

"In my own humble ways, I am ready to collaborate and partner to help ease the difficulties that both the people of Rota and this Commonwealth are now facing," Santos said.

Senate President Manglona, the Commonwealth's longest serving legislator, said the reason why he teamed up with Santos was his "extensive background in government service."

Santos worked for the CNMI government for more than 20 years, rising from the ranks: as a firefighter, he rose to become Rota's fire captain and until his appointment as DPS resident director in 2009 which he served for two years until his retirement last year.

"This is not the first time that Felix has offered himself for the people of Rota, all for public service. Because of his immense contribution and community involvement, I did not hesitate to reach out to him which he graciously accepted," reveals Manglona.

"Teamwork," adds Santos, is vital for island communities like Rota, Tinian, and Saipan, that lawmakers should work together. "What we have in Terry Santos is her lack of commitment, collaboration, and partnership to work with all stakeholders."

KAIPAT

From Page 1

struck by an IED while on combat patrol.

Taisakan belonged to the 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion of the 1st Marine Division out of Camp Pedleton in California.

The late Marine is the son of Pete Somorang Kaipat and Sinforosa Taisakan Kaipat, both now living in Tacoma, Washington.

"The last time I saw him was in 2005 before he left for the States. I burst into tears. I didn't know what to say, I didn't know what to do or think when I heard the news that our nephew was killed. I just wish I was there with my sister during this time," Kaipat's aunt Maria Taisakan told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview shortly before the family was to bury another member of the family on Saipan yesterday afternoon.

Taisakan, 42, is the youngest sister of the late Marine's mother.

She and their relatives on Saipan were preparing for the funeral of her aunt, Catalina I. Kapileo, a sister of her father, when they got a call late Wednesday night.

"I couldn't express my feelings because we're in the middle of preparations for the burial of my aunt when we heard of another death in the family," Taisakan said in an interview at her late aunt's house in San Jose.

Taisakan said the late Marine and his family used to live in Garapan before they left for Washington State.

Kaipat is one of three children. He has a younger brother and an older sister.

Taisakan said her nephew attended Oleai Elementary School, Hopwood Junior High School, and Marianas High School.

"But he completed his high school in Tacoma. Then he entered the Marines," Taisakan said.

'Helpful, caring'

Taisakan said her nephew was "very helpful and caring."

"I miss his smile. Even if you scold him, he'd smile and apologize. We have a tight family. We look after each other; and my nephew was very helpful and caring. We will all miss him," the teary-eyed Taisakan said.

She said as of yesterday afternoon, her sister, brother-in-law, and Kaipat's sister and brother were on their way to Maryland to greet the body and bring it to Tacoma, Washington where the late Marine may be buried.

"Now, we are holding the rosary for two of our family members," Taisakan added.

Her sister, former representative Malua Peter, confirmed Thursday morning that they received the news of Kaipat's death around 11:30pm Wednesday night, Saipan time.

"I really don't know what to feel. It's sad, especially right now I am in the wake of another relative," Peter, also a former member of Northern Marianas College's Board of Regents, told *Saipan Tribune* Thursday morning.

Peter's younger sister is the mother of Kaipat.

'A hero'

The U.S. Marine Corps extended its "heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of our fellow Marine who have suffered this loss and is committed to providing full support for their needs."

Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Ind-MP), upon hearing the news, said he's "saddened to learn of the loss of another of our own in the war in Afghanistan."

"Marine Corps Lance Corporal Ramon Taisacan Kaipat, a hero, gave the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. I know that there is little that I can say that will lessen Lance Corporal Kaipat's family for the pain and grief of a loss so overwhelming, but I extend my condolences and deepest sympathies to the family for the loss of their son and for their own sacrifices.

"May God bless Lance Corporal Kaipat and the Taisacan and Kaipat families," Sablan added.

Taisakan said that Kaipat was just one of her many relatives serving in the U.S. military.

"In fact, one of my brothers' son just came back from Afghanistan last month," she said.

CNMI mourns

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, upon learning of Kaipat's passing, said with great sadness and heavy hearts, they join the CNMI people in mourning "the loss of one of our own sons in uniform, USMC Lance Corporal Ramon Taisakan Kaipat."

Fitial and Inos, in a statement, said Kaipat, in choosing a career in the prestigious U.S. Marine Corps, "demonstrated his willingness and determination to live a life of discipline and personal sacrifice so that all citizens of our country would be able to live in freedom and security."

"In choosing this noble path in his life, he exemplified his undeniable strength of character and his patriotic courage and fortitude to carry through," they said.

The governor and lieutenant governor said, "From his humble beginnings as an island boy, to his service on the international warfront, Lance Corporal Kaipat lived his life on the principles of duty, honor, and country."

"In this time of sorrow, we extend our sincerest condolences and prayers to the family and friends of Lance Corporal Kaipat. Rest assured that his life of service to defend our freedom, our Commonwealth, and our country, will not be forgotten," Fitial and Inos added.

Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan) said his deepest sympathy goes to the bereaved family. Yumul himself was deployed to the Middle East as a member of the 442nd Division of the U.S. Army Reserve's 100th Infantry Battalion.

"He sacrificed his life to protect the citizens of Afghanistan and defend against this war on terrorism. We should never forget his sacrifice," Yumul said.

Besides Kaipat, the 15 other men and women from the CNMI who lost their lives while serving in the wars against terror include: Army Sgt. Yihgyh "Eddie" L. Chen (April 4, 2004), Army SSgt. Wilgene Lieto (Oct. 31, 2005), Army Spc. Derence W. Jack (Oct. 31, 2005), Army Sgt. Jesse J. Castro (Dec. 6, 2006), Marine LCpl Adam Q. Emul (Jan. 29, 2007), Army SPC Leeroy A. Camacho (Feb. 9, 2007), Army PFC John D. Flores (May 3, 2007), Army PFC Victor M. Fontanilla (May 17, 2007), Army Spc. Joe Junior G. Charfauros (June 20, 2007), Navy Seaman Anamarie San Nicolas Camacho (Oct. 22, 2007), Army Sgt. Brian S. Leon Guerrero (July 10, 2008), Army SSgt. Julian F. Manglona (Oct. 9, 2008), and Air Force SrA Audra P.M. Winkfield (June 19, 2009), Marine Cpl. Dave Michael Maliksi Santos (2010), and Sgt. George Joseph Affatica Sablan (Feb. 10, 2012).

A month after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on U.S. soil, the U.S. and Great Britain invaded Afghanistan in response. Kaipat is one of the more than 6,000 U.S. men and men who have lost their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq since then.

BLAZE

From Page 1

open only during Thursday, Friday, and Saturday between 8pm to 2am.

Matagolai said he received a call from a neighbor about the fire at 1:10pm.

"When I got here, there's thick smoke coming out from the bar and fire trucks were already here," he said.

The manager said he noticed that the smoke was thick and black, coming out from the front door and ventilating system.

He learned from firefighters that the fire affected only the right side of the bar where the dart and pool tables are located.

"We'll just wait for the result of the investigation, then start fixing," Matagolai said, adding that they regularly have a live band and doing good business.

Islander Club is going on two years next month.

Meanwhile, bush fires swept a big area and gobbled several banana plants at the former Botanical Garden in Papago on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Chamber to host USCIS CW presentation next week

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has invited USCIS Regional Director David Gulick to address its SCC members, and other business employers, while presenting an update and progress report regarding ongoing CNMI-only CW-1 visa applications and issuance.

The Chamber will host a presentation luncheon at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Azucena Rooms I & II on April 20, Friday, from 11:30am to 1pm. Luncheon charges are $20 for SCC members and representatives, and $30 for non-SCC participants.

All USCIS presentation attendees are encouraged to submit questions they would request of USCIS to the SCC offices in advance of the Friday luncheon. Questions can be addressed to SCC at executive@saipanchamber.com, or coordinator@saipanchamber.com. An additional Q&A will be conducted at the end of the USCIS presentation.

SCC will give reservation preference to its own members, but will be able to provide seating to other CNMI business community employers. Reservations can be confirmed in advance by calling SCC at 233-7150/233-7152, or by emailing the above email addresses. ***(SCC)***

SBDC director earns counseling certification

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Casey Jeszenka, Ralph Yumul, and Commerce Secretary Sixto K. Igisomar.

Ralph N. Yumul, director and business counselor for the CNMI Small Business Development Center, recently earned his certification as an Export and Trade Counselor for small businesses from the U.S. Small Business Administration and Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee.

During the recent CNMI-SBDC Office center review last week by Casey Jeszenka, director of the Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network, Yumul received an unexpected surprise when he was presented with the official award of certification at the office of the Secretary of Commerce. The Department of Commerce is the responsible host agency for the CNMI-SBDC Office.

"Late last year, in anticipating the need for exporting guidance in the CNMI, I went online with the help and guidance of Casey Jeszenka and the PISBDCN to go through the online training modules on export. This certificate award is a surprise and it definitely is a necessary boost for me to go out there and get more people, prospects, and clients for this office. I truly dedicate this to the people of the CNMI and for them to know that we are here and that our doors are open," said Yumul. ***(DOC)***

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Judge rejects plea bargain offered to ex-CPA firefighter

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge James N. Camacho has rejected a plea agreement the Office of the Attorney General had signed with a former Commonwealth Ports Authority firefighter who had turned violent and punched his brother while on probation.

Camacho said he takes domestic violence seriously and is not convinced that the "minor sanctions" will have any effect on Giovanni Camacho Sablan's behavior.

Sablan, 24, a mixed martial arts fighter, is also known as "The Fighter" and "Palaksi or "Palaxi."

The plea agreement proposes two consecutive six-month terms, all suspended except for time served, 27 days.

In rejecting the plea agreement on Wednesday, Camacho said that, although the proposed disposition includes both anger management and substance abuse classes, Sablan had similar conditions imposed on him in an earlier criminal case and yet finds himself before the court again on another domestic violence case.

In this case, Camacho said, Sablan was on probation when he was charged. The facts giving rise to the present case constitute a violation of Sablan's probation, Camacho said.

He said the factual basis of the plea agreement is that Sablan started yelling, cursing, kicking and punching things, which culminated in him punching his brother in the chest.

Camacho said the counsel has marshaled several reasons why the court should accept the plea and one of which is that Sablan "shall have a large suspended sentence hanging over his head deterring further crime."

The judge noted that Sablan previously had a large suspended sentence hanging over his head in a case where he pleaded guilty to assault and battery and disturbing the peace.

In that case, Camacho pointed out, Sablan admitted that he followed a woman who lived with him and drove recklessly in order to get her to pull over. Once the victim pulled over her car, Sablan dragged her back to her car repeatedly while she tried to escape.

Thus, Camacho said, the deterrent value of a "large suspended sentencing hanging over his head," may well be lost on Sablan.

Assistant attorney general Darren Robinson represented the government at the hearing. Assistant public defender Ben Petersburg served as counsel for Sablan.

NMC student selected to attend island sustainability conference

Northern Marianas College student Severino Alforeza was recently chosen to represent NMC at the University of Guam's upcoming 3rd Annual Conference on Island Sustainability in Tumon, Guam.

The conference is hosted by the University of Guam's Center for Island Sustainability, which endeavors to adapt and model sustainable technologies in order to address various issues to promote island sustainability in terms of the environment, economy, education, and society. This year's theme is "Energizing Green Communities."

"We are very proud of Severino," said Barbara Merfalen, dean of Academic Programs and Services. "We are confident that he will represent [NMC] well."

Alforeza, along with five students from other U.S. accredited institutions in the Pacific, submitted essays to CIS about what they each believe is a "sustainable island community" to earn the chance to participate in this conference as Regional Emerging Sustainability Scholars. Essays were evaluated based on relevance, technical merit, and creativity.

Alforeza

Students chosen to attend the conference will receive roundtrip airfare to Guam, hotel accommodations, meal allowances, as well as other services, through a grant from the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, and the Pacific Postsecondary Education Council in collaboration with UoG.

"I am very excited to attend the CIS conference in Guam and grateful for the opportunity to share my insights on sustainable island communities," said Alforeza. "This will be a great experience for me to learn from experts on their respective fields about how we can better solve our islands' environmental issues."

Alforeza is currently pursuing an associate's degree in Natural Resources Management at NMC. He hopes to one day become a marine biologist and an ecologist. ***(NMC)***

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Alleged 'ice' trafficker on Tinian falls

Police arrested Wednesday a suspected trafficker of methamphetamine or "ice" on Tinian.

Luis Cruz Cepeda, 48, was taken to the Superior Court on Saipan yesterday morning for his initial court appearance on charges of illegal possession and trafficking of a controlled substance.

Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo kept Cepeda's bail at $30,000 cash as the court had earlier imposed. Preliminary hearing will be on April 19 at 9am.

Drug Enforcement Task Force detective Steven Castro stated in his report that they were able to buy $100 worth of "ice" from Cepeda using a "cooperating source" at his farm on Tinian on Dec. 30, 2011. Castro said the "cooperating source" told him and police detective Dennis Reyes on Dec. 8, 2011, that he had purchased "ice" from the defendant in the past.

The CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force and the Department of Public Safety's Criminal Investigation Bureau conducted the sting operation against Cepeda on Dec. 30, 2011. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Delegate Sablan on *Marianas Agupa*

This Saturday, April 13, 2012, *Marianas Agupa* will feature Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan who talk about the food stamp program, specifically SNAP, between 10am and 10:30am. The show is from 9am to 11am on Magic 100.3 FM. Listeners on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota and those listening via streaming are encouraged to call in and ask questions during the show. Direct to studio at 234-5929 or use marianas agupa facebook account via instant messaging.

The Chamorro radio talk show program is hosted by Glenn H. Manglona and features reports by former mayor Joseph S. Inos, Rota correspondent Thomas D. Mendiola, Tinian correspondent David M. Cing, and a special segment called Hafa Mohon with Juanita Mendiola. Simultaneous Internet streaming via www.magic100radio.com will be available. ***(PR)***

Kagman High issues report cards today

Today, April 13, is report card distribution day at Kagman High School. Regular bell schedule; no half day. Third-period teachers will distribute to their students. Students who are absent on this day can pick up their report card from their counselor. Parents/guardians who would like to meet with their child's teacher(s) or counselor may call KHS main office to make an appointment at 237-3907/3868 or e-mail kagmanhs@gmail.com. The school will administer the SAT 10 on April 23-27. ***(PR)***

TAGAMAN 23rd SAIPAN TAGAMAN TRIATHLON 2012

MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION

Taga, Inc. the organizing committee of the 23rd Annual Tagaman Triathlon, 11th Annual Saipan Xterra Championship and 11th Taga Kids Triathlon would like to thank the following businesses, individuals and agencies for making these events a great success:

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- American Memorial Park
- Commonwealth Health Center
- NMI Nursing School (coordinated by Mr. Jaime Camero)
- American Red Cross
- Department of Public Safety
- Marianas High School National Honor Society
- Division of Boating Safety
- Division of Parks & Recreations
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- Beach Road Magazine
- KFC Triathlon Club of Japan
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- NMI Diabetes Coalition
- National Office Supply
- Pacific Trading Company

Special thanks to the different landowners, volunteers, supports, fans and general public for their kind understanding and patience in the staging of these successful events. Since we already started planning for next year's Saipan Sportfest, we would like to kindly solicit the continuing support and cooperation of those above and the general public.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Apr.13, 1999

Governor shrugs off diatribes vs Sablan

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday defended Lt. Gov. Jesus R. Sablan against criticisms leveled by former governor Froilan C. Tenorio that he has failed to help the CNMI leader in solving woes confronting the Northern Marianas. The ex-governor, who is eyeing a political comeback in the 2001 general elections, made the comments at the launching of his Reform Party, in what could be prelude to a series of attacks to potential rivals in preparation for the polls. Froilan dismissed Sablan and Juan N. Babauta, CNMI's representative to Washington, two Republicans who are expected to join the gubernatorial race, as political lightweight.

Legislators rush to aid of mayor

Saipan legislators are forging ahead with a plan to bail out the Mayor's Office from its worsening cash-flow problems which have reportedly forced the layoff of 12 employees as well as a 10 percent salary rollback this coming May for its personnel. In a local bill sponsored by Vice Speaker Jesus T. Attao, the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation is looking at appropriating some $500,000 from the poker license fees to the Mayor's Office in efforts to deal with the financial difficulties. At least $240,000 will cover the salary of 12 full-time employees for another year after their contracts expired last January without hopes of getting renewed due to lack of funds.

Apr. 13, 2000

DOT to help NMI in luring airlines

The Philippine government will have to negotiate with the United States to allow the Armenian Airlines to establish direct service between Saipan and Clark Air Base in Pampanga province, just north of Manila. Rep. Rosiky Camacho, chair of the House Public Utilities, Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, disclosed from Washington D.C. that the U.S. Department of Transportation is willing to help the CNMI facilitate the entry of the carrier in order to improve air service on the island. But before the application is approved by DOT, the U.S. government must secure authority from Philippine officials on behalf of Armenian Airlines to operate the charter flights to Saipan, he said.

TCGCC should improve image

Tinian—It was a public hearing that some people thought was intended to put the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission in a bad light, but it turned out to be an information campaign on efforts made by the TCGCC to boost the image of the agency. "I am impressed with the efforts that they have undertaken. The changes may be slow but at least they have done something," said Tinian Municipal Council chair Juanita M. Mendiola. She called for the public hearing because she felt that the people on the island have been kept in the dark on what the TCGCC has done so far. She said it would have been a great opportunity for the Commission to inform the people about their accomplishments.

Apr. 13, 2001

Camacho says 'CUC should pay for travel expenses'

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is virtually responsible for all the off-island travel damages incurred during the whole-year transaction with Enron thus moves to collect payments will be futile. Even during the early part of the negotiations, Enron made it clear beforehand that the negotiation is for the pending forging of agreement. CUC did not directly award the project to Enron and the off-island travels are for the ultimate agreement for the construction of the 60 megawatt Saipan power plant. House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communication chair Rosiky Camacho disclosed yesterday that all the travel tabs and off-island expenses during the negotiations will be closely scrutinized when the Legislature holds a joint inquiry on April 25.

Fund divided on GHLITF transfer issue

Instead of transferring its operations to the Governor's Office, the Legislature should identify funding sources to fuel the operation of the Group Health and Life Insurance Trust Fund. NMI Retirement Fund Board Chair Vicente Camacho called on to the Legislature to scrap moves that will displace the GHLI Trust Fund from its current status and be relegated under the purview of the Office of the Governor. What the government needs to do is to allocate the needed supplemental budget to retire its outstanding debts. Once funds are sourced out, debts will be paid off thus the GHLI Branch can effectively operate the program, said Mr. Camacho.

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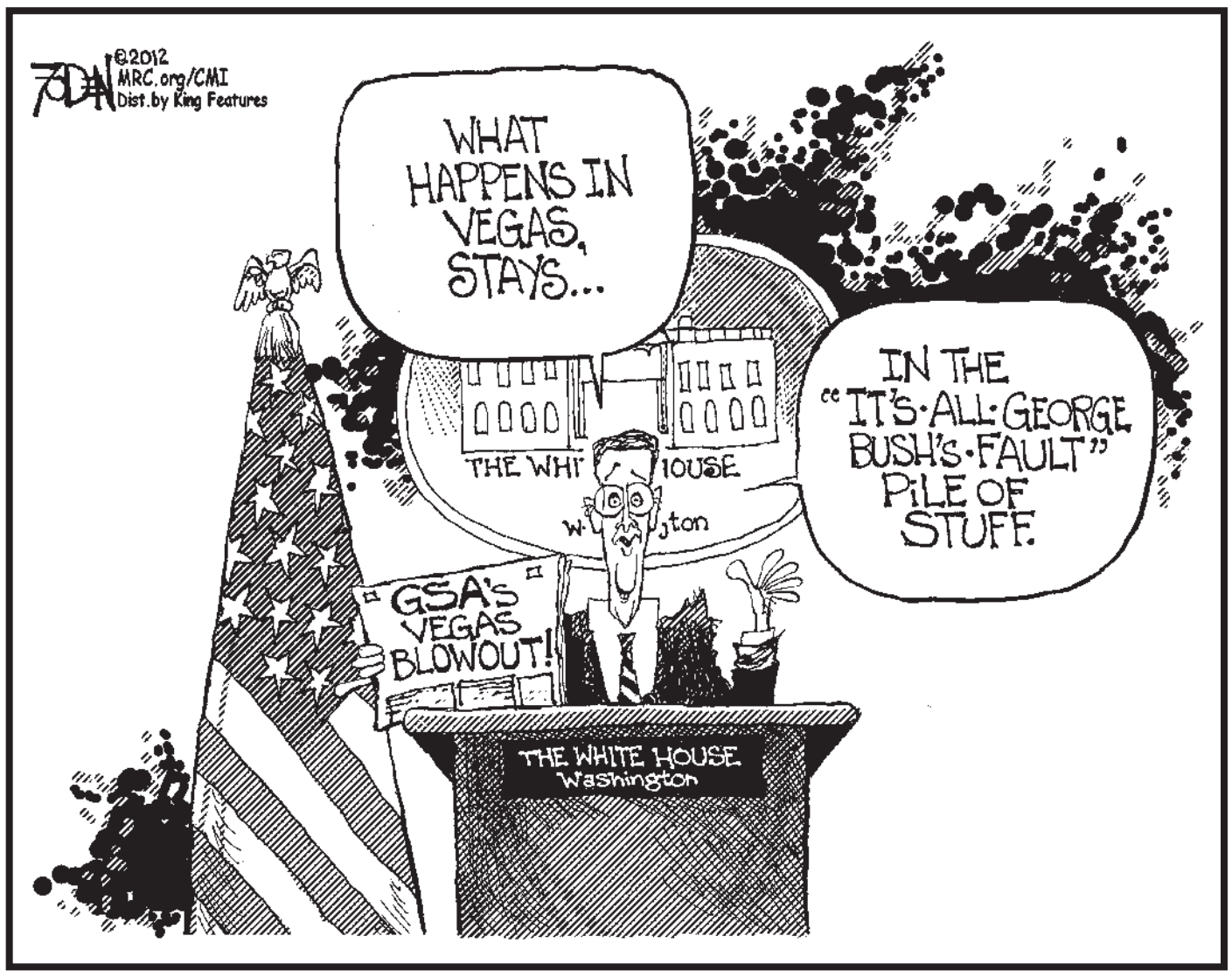
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Embracing Obamacare

By DICK POLMAN
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

An amazing moment occurred the other day on the two-year anniversary of the health-reform law that has long been burdened by the pejorative term Obamacare. The president's campaign advisers essentially said, We're going to own that term and spin it as a positive.

So they emailed their supporters: "It's about time we give it the love that it deserves. Let everyone know, 'I like Obamacare.'" And President Obama himself doubled down during a fund-raiser: "You want to call it Obamacare—that's OK, because I do care."

Team Obama's bid to own the term (which was coined by conservative critics as a synonym for socialist overreach) is just one facet of its broader plan to trumpet the health reform law as a reelection asset. No matter what the polls say. No matter what the U.S. Supreme Court may or may not do.

The official Obama campaign video devotes more time to the law than to any other issue. Meanwhile, every day, the administration is highlighting a citizen helped by the law (for instance, a Tampa nurse who got insurance for her son because the law bars insurers from denying coverage to kids with birth defects). And it's peppering swing states with pertinent statistics: "As of June 2011, 64,798 young adults in Pennsylvania gained insurance coverage as a result of the new health law"—thanks to the provision that allows parents to cover their kids up to age 26 when the offspring lack coverage of their own.

There are three reasons why Obama and his people have opted to own what has long been assumed to be a political albatross: (1) they're confident about their re-election prospects, which have been buoyed by a slowly improving economy; (2) they know that likely challenger Mitt Romney is ill-equipped to bang them on Obamacare, because, as governor, he was the one who championed Obamacare's antecedent; and (3) they frankly had no choice but to embrace the health law and make a virtue out of a necessity. Because if they didn't frame the dialogue their way, the GOP would fill the vacuum.

OK. By now you may be asking, "But what about the Supreme Court? If it overturns Obama's signature domestic achievement, particularly the key 'mandate' provision requiring Americans to buy coverage, wouldn't that ruling be a huge political victory for the Republicans?"

Not necessarily.

If the five Republican appointees strike down the law—ignoring the obvious fact that health care is interstate commerce, and ignoring previous court decisions upholding the regulation of interstate commerce, even the amount of wheat farmers can grow for personal use—two things will happen in the political realm:

The Republicans would lose the rhetorical weapon they have wielded since the summer of 2009. Politicians like Rick Santorum will no longer be able to summon the conservative base with war cries about "the death knell of freedom." And GOP lawmakers on Capitol Hill, no longer able to demand that health reform be "repealed and replaced," would be under pressure to actually tackle the challenge of covering the uninsured and fixing the abiding inequities of the Western world's most dysfunctional health system. (Which, for decades, they generally have been loathe to do.)

In other words, "Be careful what you wish for."

Meanwhile, if the high court says no to health reform, Democrats would gain a powerful rhetorical weapon, one that would help them energize the liberal base. And they'd say to swing voters: "Obama gave you a historic reform law that barred insurers from capping your health coverage, that barred insurers from denying coverage to kids with preexisting conditions, that kept

See EMBRACING on Next Page

Of fear, frustration, hopelessness

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

At sunset, we hear the distant echo from the villages similar to faint rings from the bells at the cathedral during rainy days. Sadly, the echo represents the voice of governance plastered with fear, frustration, uncertainty, and helplessness. Is it time to defer to divine providence?

Most folks have seen the huge plummet in local revenues from $256 million a decade or so ago down to $102 million last and this fiscal year, a downward spiral or loss of about $154 million. It isn't very encouraging and is very unsettling.

We know the cost of utilities will keep increasing and as it spikes upwards, it simultaneously kills more small businesses. This spells far less revenues for the local government. It obviates the dire need for fiscal integrity and a definitive plan to cap spending at every corner. This is where real leadership is put to a test. It includes questions on the disposition of substantive issues such as the following:

1. Do incumbents, Republicans and Covenant, have a thoroughly considered socio-economic recovery plan designed to grow the economy? If so, why hasn't such plan been implemented since six years ago?

2. If not, then how would you improve the lot of governance when you deftly defer to *mañana* to "let it be" hoping that some miracle would emerge from the sea of neglect?

3. With a clear record of failure in all corners to improve the economic livelihood of governance, is it right for the people of these isles to repeat with your failed leadership?

4. The economy is disastrously in chaos, if not apocalyptic in all its forms. It has forced an underemployment problem with employees whose work hours have been reduced to 64 hours per pay period. Now, read carefully:

5. This as the cost of utility skyrockets beyond the reach of most people.

6. This as the prices of gasoline and basic commodities have gone meteoric while salaries remain woefully stagnant.

7. This as the cost of health becomes prohibitive for most people Marianas-wide.

What can incumbent failures and new recruits have under their sleeves to articulate these issues? Of course, this assumes that the candidates are serious about going forward with an economic agenda first, and not muddying the waters with a bunch of social issues stuff. Don't forget, when people are struggling to put food on the table, they don't give a rat's ass about social issues. That's for the misguided elites.

This government failed to produce the required socio-economic plan to use as a guideline to navigate and revive the local economy with rock solid policies subject to refinements. It came out with a tourism plan, but what about long term plans for farming, fishing, eco-tourism, harvesting of natural resources, cottage industry, cattle, piggery, poultry, etc.?

The obvious shortsightedness in planning for the future of these isles has morphed into casino, the sale of public land, and the proposed distribution of MPLT funds. It's all temporary solutions that will not resolve the long-term financial needs of the NMI. Would you still trust the same exhausted political dinosaurs with the future of your children? Do you wish to prolong fear, frustration and hopelessness?

Quick fixes for long-term issues

Land sale: It isn't surprising the eleventh hour perceptual answer, to place an initiative to sell public land on the Nov. 6 ballot, a quick fix all the way around. It's an act of desperation by this administration that stopped remitting employer's contribution since 2006. Gov. Benigno R. Fitial now has a proposal that would steal land from our children. And he wants the sale of public land to cover his inadequacies in failed leadership. Must we surrender what belongs to posterity?

The governor proposes the sale of public land, specifically those under lease to hotels and golf resorts. Interesting his explanation that firms who buy land under this scheme could only resell the land to the NMI government. This form of sale is quite unique and looks far more problematic than meets the eye. Furthermore, would it be an encouragement to invest if this condition is posted as a requirement?

If I've purchased a piece of property, would my subsequent final disposition of land that belongs to me be conditioned upon selling it back to the original owners? After the transaction is consumed, isn't true that it's my land, therefore, my final disposition?

Another troubling issue is: How would the valuation of these properties be considered? Would the appraised and market price for the land be premised as though the land is raw land? Will it be appraised with developments now in place? What would be the cumulative figure upon sale? Is it sufficient to pay off the Fund and support its operations down the stretch? Aren't developed public lands the asset of the local government it could leverage when using bond flotation for its purposes? Quick fixes aren't lasting solutions

See FEAR on Next Page

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Our strategic region: medium powers

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed Stephens Jr. at EdStephensJr.com. His column runs every Friday.

I picked a lousy week to sweep the Asia-Pacific military radar, since the imminent (as of yesterday) North Korean rocket launch is monopolizing the news. Well, not exactly monopolizing it, I suppose; the *Economist* magazine, hardly a military journal, has weighed in on the Asian military situation. The cover of its April 7 edition is a photo of a submarine flying Chinese colors, and the text is three bold words: "China's military rise."

And that pretty much sets the stage for most discourse on the topic. The big powers get a lot of attention (the U.S., China, Russia), and a questionable upstart (North Korea) claims headlines as well. But when it comes to nuclear proliferation, I think the real surprises in the Asia-Pacific scene are going to come from the medium powers, who, thus far, don't seem to get much attention at all.

In general, a lot of folks are reaching for the Cold War outlook of two major powers counterbalancing each other. Back in the day, we had NATO around the U.S. nucleus, and the Warsaw Pact around the Soviet nucleus. In other words: Two powers and their buddies.

Will this same two-power structure apply to Asia's future?

I doubt it.

Now, I'm going to just veer into conjecture. None of this is worth worrying about. We're just riding a tangent here. We're buying a ticket on the "what-if" express. Hey, that's a sensible thing to do sometimes, just to have a mental path established if future events steer that way.

Anyway, as for the Asia-Pacific region, of which Saipan is, of course, a component, this might not be a two-power equation. Or three. Or even four. Even now, just a few steps into the new game, which pretty much coincides with the start of this, the Asian century, there are at least five nuclear arsenals present in the larger Asian sphere. This number could nearly double in the foreseeable future if certain nations decide to build their own deterrence instead of betting their sovereignty on somebody else's capabilities.

One big question, to their minds, will be if Uncle Sam is always going to have the commitment, the capability, and the money to be the guarantor of security in the region. I use "guarantor" in the nominal sense, since nothing is guaranteed in life, especially in warfare, and especially in warfare in Asia. So my terminology is colloquial and sloppy. Hey, that's how I talk, I'm more grits than caviar. Anyway, you get the idea: There's a lot riding on Uncle Sam's stature.

One thing that could inspire Asian's advanced, but, thus far, nonnuke nations to arm themselves with big booms would be if they decide they'd be better off providing their own deterrence instead of depending on someone else to protect them. My guess, and it's only a guess, is that if one nation takes this step, it could start the unraveling of the current defensive paradigm, and other nations would soon follow.

Possible result: Nuclear arms proliferation. Not among the big players. And not among any small rogue upstarts either, who I assume will be de-fanged eventually. But in the middle, among the respectable, advanced nations, who would want to pack enough of a punch to deter would-be aggressors.

The time scale in play here isn't generations, or even decades. If triggered, it could play out in just a matter of few years.

Big missiles might get big press, but small warheads are where the real punch will be. Many of the critical distances in Asia's s important areas are very short. Therefore, weapons delivery doesn't need a globe-spanning scale to have a strategic scope.

Here's some perspective: Even one small warhead carried by a small, single-engine, single-pilot fighter plane can pack the punch of over 20 Hiroshima bombs. I don't know how many nations in the Asia-Pacific region can develop such warheads, but in the West the technology certainly exists (and has for decades). Beyond that, in terms of launch platforms, things are pretty basic (considering the context), and even little bitty militaries commonly have diesel subs and various cruise missiles that could put them in the game.

Well, that's a "could happen" type of scenario, and a pretty extreme one. But I mention it because I think that some of the most important factors in the Asia-Pacific military equation are going to be not the biggest players, and not the smallest players, but the players in between who are so well-behaved and non-threatening that they don't usually get a lot of attention. And the bottom line for these guys? They can seriously militarize if they want to.

Letter to the Editor

A new delegate

The news of a possible candidate for the delegate seat to the U.S. Congress seems to flag the attention of the present representative. Unfortunately, the rhetoric mounts in Delegate Gregorio Sablan's statements. As he puts it, "It doesn't change anything for me because I am not going to be running against anyone. I am running so I can continue the work we have been doing for our people and our Northern Mariana Islands." This is not surprising and when you delve a bit into what it means, Mr. Sablan is really saying to the voters of the CNMI that it would be a mistake if he is re-elected to the U.S. House of Representative. He also challenging voters to justify who is best to represent them in the U.S. Congress. All these elements of election would be sanctioned and carried on by the tradition of a democratic society, and so be it.

Here is the deal on Mr. Sablan's re-election aspiration. As a voter and in answer to his probing question, who is best to represent the CNMI and the indigenous people of the Northern Mariana Islands? The logical response to this is relative. I cannot judge one way or the other that his mode of representation on my behalf in the U.S. Congress is the best ever until the indigenous voters of the Northern Mariana Islands send a new representative to the U.S. Congress. This is the only way that the indigenous voters would have made the logical conclusion that his representation and its idiosyncrasies did in fact turned out to be the best one. And so, without a comparative advantage or disadvantage, I would not make an intelligent evaluation to arrive at the conclusion affirming his way of representation was the only and best one the indigenous people of the Northern Mariana Island would have had.

The second point here is based on the statement made by Delegate Sablan. He said that voters gave him the opportunity to hold the office of delegate to the U.S. Congress. An opportunity to do something of material value is a possibility measured by a level of probability or chance, but at the same time it is not subject to a guarantee. In essence, the idea of having other candidates on the ballot this election year is a welcome desire by Delegate Sablan. The shadow to his public disclosure on this has its opposite effect, at least to me as an indigenous voter. What I thought the rhetoric meant in Delegate Sablan's message was that the indigenous voters of the Northern Marian Island should elect a new delegate to the U.S. Congress because how else would they evaluate who the best delegate is if one does not engage or do a comparative analysis. Two terms of congressional work is credible enough for our purpose, and let a new delegate to the U.S. Congress perform in the same way that opportunity was bestowed to Delegate Sablan. The 2012 election is an adjustment situation for the indigenous people of the Northern Mariana Island, and Delegate Sablan is urging us all to make that ultimate decision. We can only logically make that comparison if we send a new delegate to the U.S. Congress this year. I do not favor any particular party or candidate at this time, but I am glad that Delegate Sablan is urging all of us to send a new, equally if not more qualified, delegate to the U.S. Congress for the good of the indigenous people of the Northern Mariana Islands. Your readers would ascertain that it was Delegate Sablan that suggested sending a new delegate to the U.S. Congress is the thing to do and with this proposition, why not?

Francisco R.Agulto
Chalan Kanoa, Saipan

EMBRACING

From Page 10

adult kids on the family coverage, and that gave financial help to many seniors who get the Medicare prescription drug benefit. But now this law has been taken away from you."

The motivated voter is often an angry voter. And nothing makes a voter angrier than losing something that betters daily life.

Women, in particular, are sensitive about the health issue. Between the ages of 30 and 55, they're usually the prime caregivers for children and parents; in the recent words of Republican pollster Bill McInturff, "they're more engaged and active in the health care system" than the other gender. And they'd lose a lot if the health-reform law goes away—including the provision that bars insurers from dropping women when they get pregnant, the provision that bars insurers from charging them higher premiums than men, and the provision that requires insurers to cover mammograms and contraception without charging co-payments.

Women voters would be open to the Democratic argument, if only because they're heavily tilting to the Democrats already. The newly-released poll conducted by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center shows Obama topping Romney among women by a whopping 20 percentage points (and among all voters by 12)—a gender gap that even dwarfs Obama's hefty '08 advantage over John McCain. And, remember, women traditionally vote more heavily than men in presidential years; last time, they were 53 percent of the electorate.

Romney is losing women for a number of reasons—in his defense, he's probably taking collateral damage for the GOP's state-by-state efforts to enact laws meddling in women's private lives—but this shorthand is surely a contributing factor: Obama favors health reform, while Romney keeps vowing "on day one" to repeal it "root and branch." This, despite his own track record of signing similar health-reform legislation in Massachusetts.

Imagine what might happen this autumn. Assume, for the moment, that the high court upholds health reform (still a possibility). The GOP would still have its issue, and Romney would vow anew to repeal the law—whereupon Obama would seize the opening, and paint Romney as a guy whose convictions are as ephemeral as an Etch a Sketch image.

Obama would point out that Romneycare was the template for Obamacare. And what fun it would be, at the debates, if Obama quoted the old Romney, the gubernatorial guy who said that the health-coverage mandate is "a Republican way of reforming the market." What better way for Obama to convince women of Romney's hypocrisy—and depress conservative turnout in November?

So no wonder Obama wants to own Obamacare. He has ample messaging options. Regardless of whether the health law is dead or alive this fall, his political pulse seems strong.

Dick Polman is a columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to him at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at dpolman@phillynews.com; blog: hhttp://www.dickpolman.blogspot.com.

FEAR

From Page 10

but just that—quick fixes!

Distribution of MPLT funds: Then came the latest innovation to spend everything down to the penny, specifically the distribution of MPLT funds, however limited, to the indigenous people, according to proponent Lang Tenorio. Talk about creative financing at the expense of others—national taxpayers—ready for another fiesta-like splurge.

The first question proponents must answer is whether in fact seed funds for this agency originated from within? If so, what's the source of such seed money? If not, can someone point out its origin? Isn't it true that such funds came from the backbreaking hard work of U.S. mainland taxpayers appropriated by the U.S. Congress? So where's the indigenous possession of money that came from national taxpayers?

We can't constantly be on the hunt for quick fixes, though the *la mañana* culture goes together with such a scheme. We must bite the bullet so we could buckle down to figuring out the beast: Where do we go from here and how do we remap out the next journey? We've done too many ad hoc schemes that we no longer have anything left in our bag of tricks. It brings back the question of leadership and whether we still have people left on the islands who could do what's right.

There's also the proposed initiative to pay the indigenous people dividends from lease of public land. A bit shortsighted given the obvious: to engage in unbridled expenditure of funds. We're talking money that should be saved or invested for that rainy day, so to speak. It's a sure ticket to perpetuating colossal corruption in government.

Isn't it our responsibility to ensure that we live within in our means? Why would we detract from what's purposeful and beneficial to all? The proposal to pay dividends from lease of public land only strengthens and confirms racism and willful discrimination. Why rush into judgment on an issue that requires a long thoughtful process?

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly sunny with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼75°	▲87° ▼75°	▲87° ▼75°

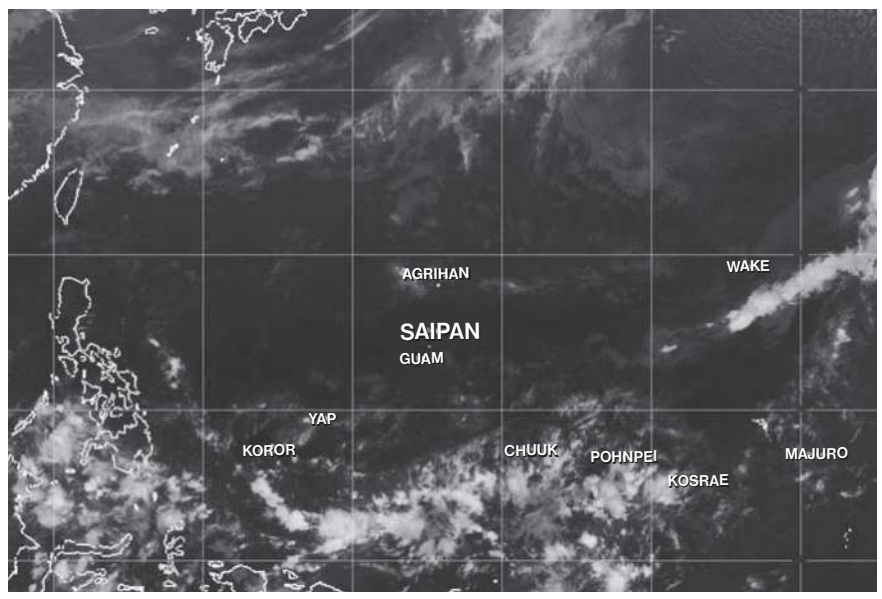
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲87	▼78
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲89	▼78
Chuuk	Showers	▲91	▼80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲86	▼78
Kosrae	Showers	▲86	▼78
Majuro	Showers	▲86	▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲69	▼62
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼49
Hong Kong	Thundershowers	▲76	▼72
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼71
London	Showers	▲57	▼39
Los Angeles	Rain	▲56	▼46
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲93	▼78
Melbourne	Sunny	▲77	▼53
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼69
New York	Sunny	▲66	▼47
Osaka	Showers	▲63	▼47
Paris	Showers	▲58	▼40
Pusan	Sunny	▲63	▼49
Rome	Showers	▲62	▼52
Salem	Showers	▲60	▼39
San Francisco	Showers	▲52	▼47
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲63	▼41
Tokyo	Showers	▲55	▼49
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲68	▼48

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from 3N130E through a weak circulation centered southeast of Koror near 4N138E to end near EQ171E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are located south of Koror between 6N and the equator from 131E to 141E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring farther east to the south of Chuuk and Pohnpei within 210 miles of a line from EQ148E to 7N157E. A surface trough located west of the Marshall Islands runs southward from 12N166E to 3N165E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are present southwest of Majuro within 60 miles of a line from 1N165E to 6N171E. A cold front stretches southwestward from 25N175E to end south of Wake Island at 17N166E east of 170E. Numerous showers and scattered thunderstorms are found within 60 miles of the cold front.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:51 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
8:16 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
12:52 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
8:34 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:04 AM	6:31 PM
Saturday	6:03 AM	6:31 PM
Sunday	6:03 AM	6:31 PM
Monday	6:02 AM	6:32 PM
Tuesday	6:02 AM	6:32 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:07 AM	11:48 AM
Saturday	12:58 AM	12:45 PM
Sunday	1:43 AM	1:38 PM
Monday	2:25 AM	2:29 PM
Tuesday	3:05 AM	3:18 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05062	2:10am	2:40am	1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
C05064	4:15am	5:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily
C05074	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05076	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	6:50pm	7:40pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	7:00pm	7:50pm	3, 6
C05072	9:55pm	10:45pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05072	10:05pm	10:55pm	3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			
DL287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
DL285	6:35am	9:15am	1, 3, 5, 7
DL297	4:25pm	7:15pm	Daily
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)			
OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:20am	Daily via KIX
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)			
OZ608	3:35am	7:05am	4, 7
DL581	4:10am	7:30am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C05070/191	4:35am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:00am	10:25pm	Daily via NRT
C05068/183	8:25am	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM
C05068/183	8:25am	9:40pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:40pm	1, 4, 7 via GUM
C05076/193	3:10pm	11:00pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN
C05072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
C05072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			
OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C05076/147	3:10pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:50pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
C05064	5:15am	5:45am	1, 5
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
C05062	3:10am	3:45am	1, 5
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
C05062	2:10am	3:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05071	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C05073	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05075	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05077	5:30pm	6:20pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05077	5:40pm	6:30pm	3, 6
C05079	8:35pm	9:25pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05079	8:45pm	9:35pm	3, 6
NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
DL286	7:40pm	12:20am+1	2, 4, 6, 7
OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN			
OZ120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	Daily
SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via KIX
OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ607	9:00pm	2:20am+1	3, 6
DL580	10:10pm	2:55am+1	4, 7
GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
DL172/288	8:00am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT
C0190/5077	10:55am	6:30pm	3, 6 via GUM
C0190/5079	10:55am	9:35pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0192/5071	10:25pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
C0184/5071	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ704/603	11:40pm	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
C0184/5071	11:59pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:00am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C0180/5071	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Kilili: NMC to get $40K OIA grant

CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan said Wednesday that the Interior Department's Office of Insular Affairs has approved the award of a nearly $40,000 Technical Assistance Program grant to Northern Marianas College. The funds will support development of a five-year strategic plan for NMC by the college administration and its partners in business and government.

Sablan was joined by NMC president Sharon Hart in publicly thanking Assistant Secretary of the Interior Anthony M. Babauta for his decision to support the planning, which is part of NMC's continuing accreditation efforts.

"Assistant Secretary Babauta called me this morning to relay the good news that he had approved NMC's grant application in its entirety," said Sablan. "He and I have spoken previously about the request, and I explained to him how important the continued success of Northern Marianas College is to our entire community—businesses and individuals alike.

"The assistant secretary has shown his agreement with this assessment through the approval of this application, even at a time when discretionary federal funds are increasingly difficult to obtain."

Hart thanked Babauta and emphasized that the grant is aligned with efforts by the Office of Insular Affairs to promote economic growth and development in the islands. "As Northern Marianas College develops its new strategic plan, it is imperative that we work closely with the business community and government leaders to ensure we are fulfilling our role to help meet the workforce needs of the local economy.

"This grant will help the college engage business and government leaders in data-driven planning that will ultimately position higher education as the engine for economic growth in the CNMI," Hart said.

Sablan congratulated the Board of Regents, Hart, and the entire faculty and staff of the college for the successful application. "The collective effort of many individuals at the college led to a well-written, compelling grant application [that] will pay dividends for years to come both for the institution and for our community. I congratulate everyone who contributed to this successful effort."

The grant will fund an inclusive planning process that will engage business and government leaders in assessing the workforce and training needs of the community, forecasting future workforce and economic trends, and discussing how the college can promote economic growth in the Commonwealth. The final product of the process will be a strategic plan that will include values, a new vision and mission, and between three and seven strategic goals and supporting priority initiatives. The plan will serve as a road map for the college in its ongoing efforts to build local capacity to satisfy the workforce needs of the Northern Mariana economy. The plan will also help the college meet accreditation standards of educational quality and focus on data-driven, continuous quality improvement. ***(PR)***

2 beach sites red-flagged

The Division of Environment Quality has red-flagged the Palms Resort beach and Chalan Piao beach and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

DEQ said that samples collected from these locations had excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. Water samples were taken from 48 locations on Saipan this week.

For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

HEALTH WALK
APRIL 14, 2012
LIVE HEALTHY:
Life Walk
with
PSS
Registration Information:
Saipan: 5:30am to 8:00am – 13 Fisherman Pavilion
Tinian: 6:00am to 8:00am – Tachog'na Beach
Rota: 6:00am to 8:00am – Joaquin M. Ogo Softball Field
– Dr. Rita Hocog Inos RJSHS
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Three-day Environmental Expo at AMP next week

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In celebration of Environmental Awareness Month this April, the Division of Environmental Quality is hosting the Environmental Expo at the American Memorial Park on April 17 to 19, from 8:30am to 2:30pm.

The three-day expo will feature booths and exhibits set up by government agencies, nonprofit and private organizations to educate students on various programs and environmental efforts.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the expo, which targets 4th and 5th grade students from public and private schools on island.

"The goal is to bring together private and public agencies to exhibit their programs and engage students in activities focused on environmental issues affecting the health and beauty of the island," said DEQ environmental engineer Emanuel Borja, who also serves as the Environmental Awareness Month committee chair.

The theme for the month-long celebration is, "My Air, Your Land, Their Sea, Our Environment."

"The objective of Environmental Awareness Month is to remind the people of the CNMI that we are all key players in protecting the environment, and [our theme] emphasizes the shared aspect of the environment," Borja told *Saipan Tribune*.

The expo, Borja said, is among the several events they plan to conduct to encourage public awareness of environmental issues, public participation in cleaning the environment, and public education on how the government works to protect the environment.

Other events include a tree planting, a fashion show, islandwide cleanup, and a film festival.

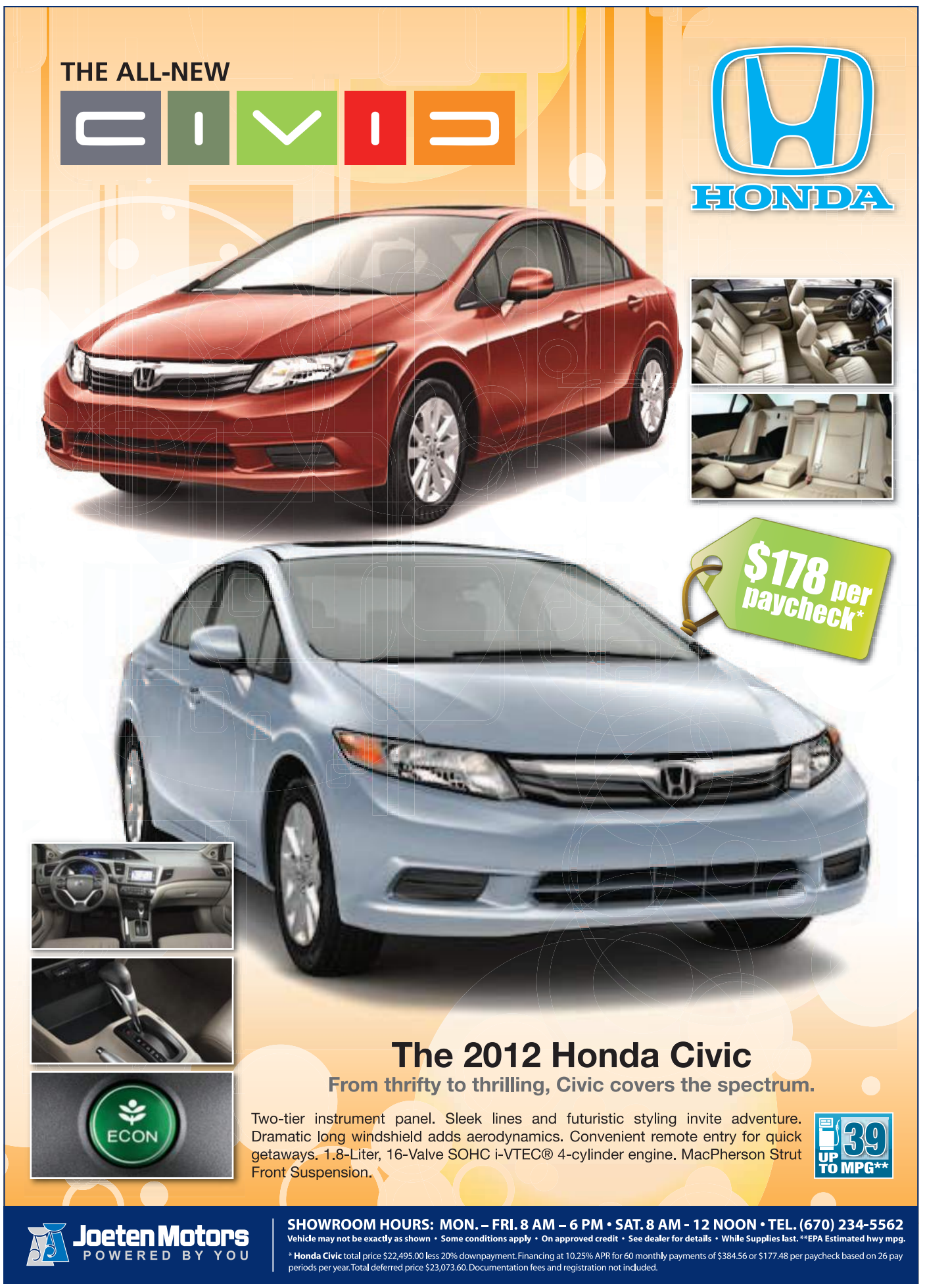
Borja noted that they invited various health groups on island to participate in the expo.

"Although it is environmentally focused, we believe that healthy minds promote a healthy environment," he said.

Exhibitors for the 2012 Environmental Expo are the CNMI Marine Monitoring Team; DEQ's Wastewater, Earthmoving, and Erosion Control, Water Quality Lab, Pesticides and Storage Tanks, Safe Drinking Water, and Toxic Waste Management; Division of Fish and Wildlife's Enforcement and Brown Tree Snake programs; Department of Land and Natural Resources Sea Turtle Program; U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service; Public Works' Energy Division and Adopt a Highway program; Youth Environmental Ambassadors; Historic Preservation Office; Northern Marianas College – Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service; Public Safety Fire Division; Tan Holdings; Mariana Islands Nature Alliance; Pacific Marine Resources Institute; Saipan Seventh-Day Adventist; Asia-Pacific Academy of Sciences, Science Education, and Environmental Management; Commonwealth Health Center's Non-Communicable Disease Bureau; Eco Island Development, and L50.

"Upon exiting the expo, students will also be able to write their 'Wish for the Environment' on a wish banner and also answer questions on flipcharts related to the presentations that were exhibited," added Borja.

The community is invited to check out the Environmental Expo next week. For more information, call DEQ at 664-8500.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Images Saipan steps up to the plate for 2012 MMAC

Images Saipan, Ltd., a professional photography business, is the latest major sponsor of the 2012 Marianas March Against Cancer.

Owned and operated by Dr. Jack Hardy, Images Saipan will provide photographic services throughout the MMAC event on April 27 to 28, 6pm to 6am, at the Hopwood Jr. High School field.

Catherine Attao-Toves, overall committee chair for the 2012 MMAC, thanked Hardy and Images Saipan "for their staunch support in the fight against cancer."

"Dr. Hardy is not only a senior adviser to the 2012 MMAC committee, he is a gifted photographer who provides his expert services as part of his sponsorship agreement," she added.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the MMAC and will feature a survivor ceremony and lap to honor all cancer survivors who will be treated to dinner sponsored by TakeCare/FHP. Cancer survivors will receive a unique medallion commemorating their fight and a free t-shirt.

During the event, a luminary ceremony will be conducted wherein candles will be lit around the field to honor and in memory of all those who have been affected by cancer.

Attao-Toves urged the public to take part in the largest signature fundraiser of the Commonwealth Cancer Association, a volunteer-led nonprofit organization that ensures all funds raised are spent on cancer patient support services, cancer awareness programs, and other cancer-related activities in the CNMI.

"We invite the entire community to come down and enjoy a night of great food and drinks, fun games and live entertainment," she said.

For more information, call 285-1828, email attaoc@yahoo.com or visit www.ccamarianas.org. ***(Clarissa V. David)***

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Ace of Diamond Tuna $1.39
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Hormel Chili with Beans $1.69 15 OZ.
Hormel Chili No Beans $1.79 15 OZ.
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Kimchi Base $6.39 13.5 OZ.
Morton Salt 85¢ 450 gm
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BEVERAGE

Kool-Aid Jammers $3.25 BOX
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Ruby Kist Apple Juice $3.99 64oz.
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Manta Ray Band's 'Keep A Flame Tree Alive' fundraiser kicks off

MONETH G. DEPOSA

U.S. Congressional Delegate Gregorio Sablan joins members of the Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Band and their musical director Will DeWitt and principal Jesse Tudela in the launching of the band's latest fundraiser "Keep A Flame Tree Alive" yesterday in Koblerville.

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
Moneth_Deposa@Saipantribune.Com
REPORTER

Another major fundraising campaign for the Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Band was launched yesterday following the group's acceptance of the first five seedlings sponsored by U.S. Congressional Delegate Gregorio Sablan.

With the theme "Keep A Flame Tree Alive," the Manta Ray Band is seeking the community's support by sponsoring a seedling for $100 to be planted in different areas and villages on islands.

» Kilili sponsors first five seedlings for group's Olympic trip

The campaign is part of a larger effort to raise $300,000 for the 50-member student group that will perform this summer at the London Olympics. Their goal is to get enough sponsorships to plant 180 seedlings.

Sablan sponsored $500 worth of seedlings, which he helped students plant in Koblerville yesterday. At the simple turnover ceremony, Sablan said the activity is a win-win situation for students, donors, and the community.

"The Manta Ray's flame tree fundraising is such a worthwhile cause to support. Not only does it help the band members get to London for their historic representation of the Northern Marianas at the Olympics—something we will all be so proud of. But also by planting flame trees around the island we are contributing to the long-term beauty of Saipan and strengthening our local tourism industry," said Sablan.

Sablan thanked Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Arnold Palacios, Agriculture director Tom Castro, and CNMI Forester Victor Deleon Guerrero, Jr. for providing the seedlings to the Manta Ray Band. Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, SSHS principal Jesse Tudela, and the band's musical director, Will DeWitt, were also recognized for conceptualizing the idea to generate funds for the group.

According to DeWitt, individual or groups can sponsor a tree that will be planted next to the Koblerville Elementary School and other areas in the community. He said the fundraiser will run until their scheduled trip in July this year.

Saipan Tribune learned that the band has an estimated $150,000 raised from fundraisers and donations so far. It still needs over $100,000 to cover the entire trip.

"I know it's a lot of money but with the support we're getting from the community, we're very optimistic," said DeWitt.

Tudela, for his part, announced the band's upcoming raffle fundraiser on May 4 at Fiesta Resort & Spa Hotel. Of the 1,500 tickets produced for the event, only 200 have so far been returned to the group.

The group will also have a mini-concert in collaboration with a Korean musical group. The members are also planning to participate in the upcoming Liberation Day festivities.

Man gets 30-day sentence for hitting another with rifle butt

A man who hit another man with the butt of an air rifle and damaged another person's vehicle pleaded guilty and was slapped with a 30-day prison term.

David Muña Sablan pleaded guilty last week to assault and battery in his 2008 criminal case and to assault and battery and criminal mischief in his 2011 criminal case as part of a plea agreement with the government.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo sentenced the 33-year-old Sablan to a total of three years for both cases, all suspended except for 30 days, with credit for time served.

Upon his release, Sablan will be placed on three years' supervised probation. He was required to undergo anger management counseling, drug and alcohol treatment and any other counseling recommended by the treatment provider or the Office of Adult Probation.

Sablan is prohibited from having contact with victims Komgish Tannakan and Andave Camacho Marcehadesch. He was ordered to complete 200 hours of community service, and pay a $500 fine and $400 probation fee.

According to the plea agreement, on March 1, 2008 on Saipan, Sablan intentionally punched and struck Marcehadesch in the head with the butt of an air rifle.

On May 22, 2011, on Saipan, the defendant pushed Tannakan up against his car and held him by his forearm and searched through his pocket. The defendant then threw a wine bottle at Tannakan's car, causing damage to the vehicle. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

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(Power and Water EXCLUDED)
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- Common waste container
- Furnished unit w/ balcony
- Free moving-service
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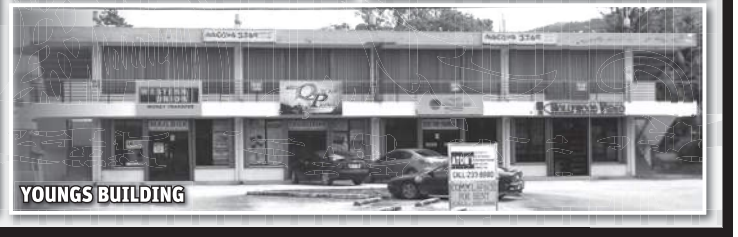
(Power and Water EXCLUDED)
LOCATION: Lower Miha, GARAPAN, nearby 747 Dining & Bar
AMENITIES:
- 24-hr water supply
- Back-up generator
- Common waste container
- Furnished unit w/ balcony
- Free moving-service
- Laundry facility
- On-site maintenance
- Parking space

GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM

ANAKS OCEAN VIEW HILL SAIPAN

SEDA BLANCA APARTMENT

PASTEL INN APARTMENT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Hart to appeal to board on CFAO position

Northern Marianas College president Sharon Y. Hart will cite the college's budget constraints in her appeal to the Board of Regents to reconsider its earlier decision to reinstate and hire a chief financial administrative officer for the institution.

Hart told *Saipan Tribune* during the celebration of Tan Holdings' 40th Anniversary at Saipan Grand Hotel Tuesday that a meeting is temporarily scheduled next week where CFAO position will be discussed.

"In my opinion, we have numerous individuals who are always doing that responsibility internally. Because of the college's difficult financial situation, I would be bringing that up to the board for discussion in the next meeting," she said.

Hart said she's counting on the capability of newly appointed dean of administration Dave Attao, who also oversees the CFAO and fiscal and budget operations.

Hart

In a board meeting in February, the Board of Regents favored the reinstatement of the CFAO position, citing its critical role in meeting accreditation requirements. Prior to this meeting, the CFAO position was dissolved and the dean of administration post was created in its place. ***(Moneth Deposa)***

Ex-convict allegedly caught green sea turtle

Division of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officers arrested Tuesday night in Kagman an ex-convict for allegedly catching an endangered green sea turtle.

During the search at the residence of defendant Alex K. Borja, Conservation Officers allegedly seized one turtle carapace, turtle meat and bone, cooking pot, Trochus shells, and marijuana plants.

At yesterday's hearing, the Superior Court temporarily released Borja.

Conservation Officer John Tagabuel stated in his report that, on Monday a conservation officer received a call from a concerned citizen reporting Borja's possession and harvesting of a green sea turtle.

Tagabuel said they met the concerned citizen who confirmed that he saw the turtle on top of a table and tied with a rubber outside Borja's residence on Sunday.

Tagabuel said the concerned citizen reported that he had seen Borja in possession of green sea turtles on four other occasions.

The conservation officers then obtained a search warrant from Superior Court associate judge Kenneth L. Govendo. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Rotary to ramp up ticket sales for Las Vegas Night

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Rotary Club of Saipan will set up booths in different venues to sell tickets for this year's Las Vegas Night slated for May 5 at the Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan.

Rotary secretary Laila Boyer said on Tuesday that they will have a booth on Saturday, April 14, at the Sabalu Market, Civic Center grounds in Susupe and during the 31st Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival on April 20 to 22 also at the Civic Center.

Boyer said they are still negotiating with the 2012 Marianas March Against Cancer committee if they could have a booth during the event on April 27 to 28 at the Hopwood Jr. High School field in Chalan Piao.

Additionally, Boyer said each Rotarian will also be tasked to sell tickets to Las Vegas Night, which will have a Cinco de Mayo theme this year.

Boyer disclosed that the 2012 Las Vegas Night grand prize winner can choose between cash prize or a brand new car from Triple J Motors.

Rotary president Pete Igitol, for his part, urged Rotarians to help sell more tickets for the event, the proceeds for which will go to their funds for the Kagman children's playground.

"This is our last fundraiser for this Rotary year and we need to make some money. I know the stakes are high but we need to do all that we can. Ask your fellow Rotarians and friends to come and help," said Igitol.

For more information, visit Rotary's Facebook page or email saipanrotary@gmail.com.

Meet-and-greet with Lumi today

The Committee-to-elect Illuminanda "Lumi" Reyes Bermudes for Saipan senator said yesterday that it will have the first meet-and-greet with the candidate today, April 13, 2012, at the Susupe Civic Center Basketball Pavilion, from 5pm to 7pm.

The public is invited to come and have a conversation on various important issues that matter to you as voters "and for Lumi to listen and hear your suggestions, but most importantly, your solutions."

"This first meet-and-greet begins our journey to reclaim what government is—to reaffirm the basic democratic principle that our people is the government and that public policies must reflect the voice of the people," said Lumi.

The committee also unanimously selected as its chair Dr. Jessica Barcinas Taylor, who graciously accepted her selection and thanked the committee.

Bermudes

The Committee also identified key dates for the succeeding meet-and-greet in other key population areas up until June, at which time they will schedule the rest:

May 11, Friday: San Antonio Basketball Court

June 1, Friday: Koblerville Basketball Court

June 22, Friday: Dandan Baseball Field

Lumi Bermudes is running for Saipan senator in the upcoming November 2012 midterm election. Email lumisenate2012@gmail.com for any question and/or feedback. ***(PR)***

Hilux Truck Show at NMC's Charter Day

The Northern Marianas College, along with Power 99 and Microl Toyota, is inviting community members to sign up to participate in the CNMI's first ever Hilux Truck Show.

"NMC has had car shows before but this is the first time we're hosting a Hilux Truck Show," said L.J. Castro, program coordinator for the Office of Student Leadership and Activities. "We're inviting owners of Saipan's hottest low riders to come out and join in the fun."

Those interested in participating in the Hilux Truck Show must register before NMC Charter Day on May 4, 2012. There is a $20 registration fee. Showtime is between 5pm and 9pm.

Applications forms are available for download at www.nmcnet.edu, or can be picked up at the NMC Student Center in Building J. For more information, contact L.J. Castro at 234-5498 ext. 1251/1253 or email luisjohnc@nmcnet.edu.

The NMC 2012 Charter Day Committee will be giving out the Best in Show Award to competitors at the end of the competition. The committee would also like to thank the sponsors for this event, Microl Toyota and Power 99.

NMC Charter Day is an annual celebration that commemorates the establishment of the College in 1981. It is one of the largest celebrations in the CNMI. This year's event will take place on May 4, 2012, from 4pm to 10pm at NMC As Terlaje campus.

For more information about NMC Charter Day competitions, entertainment or vendor information, visit www.nmcnet.edu. ***(NMC)***

JOETEN ACE HARDWARE
April Showers
Early Bird Sale
Saturday, April 14 from 8 to 12 p.m.
25%off
Furniture, Whirlpool Appliances, Power & Hand Tools, Selected Hardware, Plumbing, Electrical, Paint Supplies, Lawn & Garden, Pet Supplies, Automotive, Cleaning Supplies & Housewares
15%off
Garden Power Tools, Air Compressor, Pressure Washer, Generator and Bed Sets and Mattress/Foundation
10% off Chain Saw
Some items not discountable / Sale items not included (Lumber, Building Materials, Water pump, Water Heater and etc.)
ACE The Helpful Place!
Saipan & Rota
ALL LOCATIONS - Gualo Rai, Susupe , San Vicente and Songsng Rota Branch
Except Sale Items
Cash and Carry
Some items not discountable
No rain checks
Delivery charge $10.00
Credit card acceptable
In stock merchandise only
We accept major credit cards

Pacifica Insurance names winners of giveaway promotion

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marcia Calvo, second right, March winner of "Win A Shopping Spree in 2012" giveaway promotion of Pacifica Insurance Underwriters Inc., receives her $100 gift certificate from Joeten Superstore manager James Sablan and Pacifica Insurance representatives Keomi Palacios and Neftis Sablan at the Joeten Superstore next to Hollywood Theatres last April 5.

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc. is thanking its current policyholders and attracting new ones through the "Win A Shopping Spree in 2012" giveaway promotion.

A collaboration between Pacifica Insurance and Joeten Superstore, the promotion is open to all individuals and business establishments that have an insurance policy with one of the first insurance companies in the CNMI.

Each monthly winner will receive $100 gift certificate at the Joeten Superstore must pay their premium(s) in full before claiming the prize.

Pacifica Insurance general manager Shirley T. Sablan said they wanted to give their winners options, which is why they chose Joeten Superstore for its "dynamic array of quality merchandise."

Sablan noted that since launching the promotion, Pacifica Insurance has seen steady growth in the business.

In fact, Pacifica Insurance's Keomi Palacios and Neftis Sablan and Joeten Superstore manager James Sablan awarded Marcia Calvo, the promotion's March winner, her prize last April 5.

Winners for January and February were Masahiro Yokohama of Hiro Corp. and Minda Cullen, respectively.

"The shopping spree giveaway promotion was designed not only to entice new clients but also to reward our existing and loyal customers," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

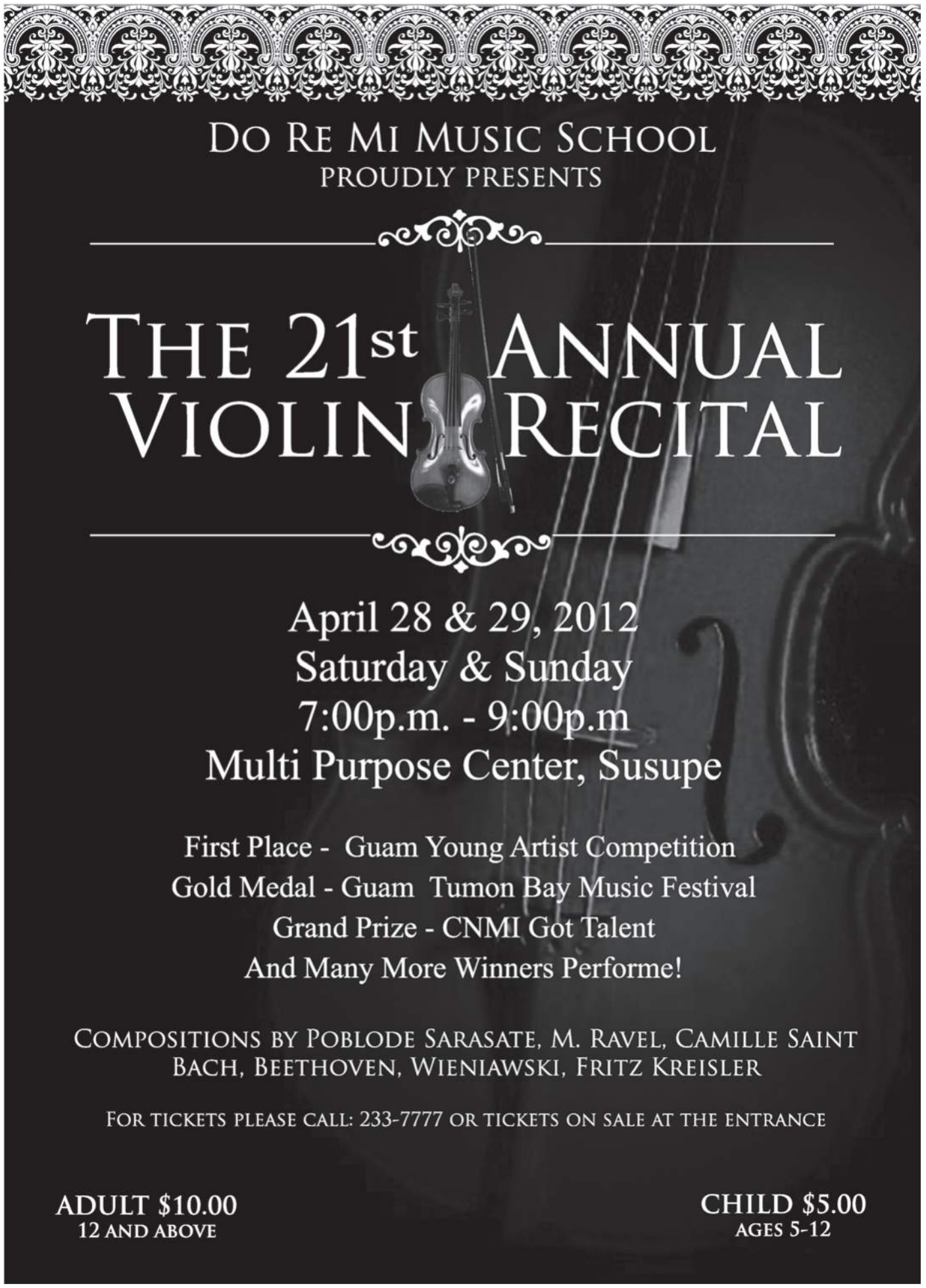
Sablan said the promotion "sets them apart" from their competition as they continue to offer incentives to show their appreciation to their clients despite the dwindling economy.

"It was only right for us to give them something more to look forward to," she added.

Sablan encouraged those who are looking for a company to cater to their insurance needs to consider Pacifica Insurance and get a chance to win a shopping spree gift certificate.

"Pacifica Insurance was once of the first insurance in the CNMI. We offer coverage for auto, life, health, property, workers compensation, liability, and other commercial lines," said Sablan.

For more information, visit Pacifica Insurance at the second floor of Joeten Center in Susupe, log in to www.pacificains.com, or call 234-6267.


DO RE MI MUSIC SCHOOL
PROUDLY PRESENTS
THE 21st ANNUAL VIOLIN RECITAL
April 28 & 29, 2012
Saturday & Sunday
7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m
Multi Purpose Center, Susupe
First Place - Guam Young Artist Competition
Gold Medal - Guam Tumon Bay Music Festival
Grand Prize - CNMI Got Talent
And Many More Winners Performe!
COMPOSITIONS BY POBLODE SARASATE, M. RAVEL, CAMILLE SAINT BACH, BEETHOVEN, WIENIAWSKI, FRITZ KREISLER
FOR TICKETS PLEASE CALL: 233-7777 OR TICKETS ON SALE AT THE ENTRANCE
ADULT $10.00
12 AND ABOVE
CHILD $5.00
AGES 5-12

Do Re Mi Music School to hold 21st violin recital

The DO RE MI Music School will be holding its 21st Violin Recital on April 28 and 29, from 7pm to 9pm, at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Students of the school will be performing moving pieces composed by Beethoven, Charles Dancla, M. Ravel, Pablo de Sarasate, Fritz Kreisler, J. Brahms, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Johannes Sebastian Bach, and more. There will also be special dances to entertain the crowd.

Through this annual violin recital, the DO RE MI Music School hopes to show how wonderful the students' performances are, and also to raise funds to help them participate in future violin competitions to assist them in realizing their music dreams.

"We are willing to do our best to help these talented children to have an opportunity to display their talents, but the competitions require a lot of funds, such as registration fees, airline tickets, accommodations, etc. An international competition generally requires six months to one year of preparation, so the family and the school requires a lot of time to prepare the competition and provide financial support," said school founder and principal Ao Zhang. "DO RE MI Music School is a private school, so we do not have government financial support. Some students in our school are very talented but they cannot afford the cost of all the competitions, so we hope that some companies can give them support."

Tickets are $5 for children ages 5-12 and $10 for those ages 12 and older. Due to the concentration required for the students to perform, the school is requesting that only those ages 5 and older be allowed into the venue.

The Do Re Mi Music School is a professional violin school founded by Ao Zhang on Saipan in 1991. Ao Zhang graduated from Tianjin Conservatory of Music in China with a bachelor's degree major in violin. He served as chief violinist at the college orchestra during his university years and also as chief violinist at Tianjin Opera in China for 17 years before he moved to Saipan.

For more information contact Ao Zhang at 233-7777 or email sheepao@hotmail.com. ***(PR)***

SHRM'S WORKFORCE READINESS INITIATIVE

New program seeks to train US workers for workplace

The CNMI Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management announces the first phase of its *Workforce Readiness* Initiative on Monday, April 16. The CNMI SHRM was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior through the CNMI Department of Commerce in support of the CNMI Economic and Labor Enhancement Program. This initiative to benefit the community will kick off on April 16 with a one-week warehouseman training program.

SHRM's role in administering this grant through its *Workforce Readiness* Initiative will be to facilitate the preparation of unemployed U.S. qualified workers through job preparation and skills training to be better qualified to enter the CNMI job market.

SHRM will:

- Establish a program of training that will assist U.S. qualified workers (defined as U.S. citizens, FAS citizens, and green card holders) to be better prepared to join the CNMI workforce
- Assist, as possible, in the placement of training graduates with companies that have agreed to accept *Workforce Readiness* graduates either in an on-the-job training or employment basis

In order to accomplish the intent of this grant, SHRM needs the help of the business community. The *Workforce Readiness* Initiative will consist of a series of one-week pre-placement training programs with a combination of general employee enhancement and job specific skills in employment areas where SHRM-member companies and other community businesses have indicated a need for replacement or additional staff. The initiative will start off with warehouseman training, followed by wait staff, food service workers, housekeepers, telephone operators, clerical and other job-types, as the needs are identified. It is anticipated that the warehouseman program will include forklift certification training to enhance the graduates' value to prospective employers.

SHRM asks that businesses notify the *Workforce Readiness* Initiative of types of staff that they might need, so that the initiative can arrange training programs to help fill these needs. SHRM also asks community businesses to work with the initiative to place the people trained by the various programs into their organizations. In turn, the SHRM *Workforce Readiness* Initiative will be working with the Workforce Investment Agency and the CNMI Department of Labor to obtain suitable candidates that can receive WIA support to help with salary costs.

As mentioned above, the Workforce Readiness Initiative is for the benefit of unemployed U.S. qualified workers. Qualified individuals who are registered with WIA or the DOL Employment Services should contact those offices and let them know of their interest. Those who are not registered and are interested in the initiative should also contact those offices and express their interest. All interested candidates should sign up with WIA to allow them to help employers with funding of initiative graduates. You can also contact Frank Gibson, the Workforce Readiness Initiative manager, by e-mail at hrsupportcnmi@gmail.com.

Although the initiative cannot guarantee a job for every participant, it will make every effort to get each graduate employed. Several companies have already committed to accepting initiative graduates and the initiative will continue to source jobs through its SHRM-member companies and other employers. Companies interested in considering initiative graduates can also contact Gibson at hrsupportcnmi@gmail.com.

This program is supported by federal funds in the amount of $102,000 under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, CNMI Economic and Labor Enhancement Program through a sub-grant award from the CNMI Department of Commerce. ***(SHRM)***

Union Bank dismisses cross-claim vs FHB

Union Bank dismissed Wednesday its cross-claim complaint against First Hawaiian Bank in connection with Saipan Mayor Donald G. Flores' lawsuit against the two banks.

Sean E. Frink, counsel for Union Bank, filed Wednesday a notice of dismissal of their cross-claim in the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

Frink said that Union Bank dismisses its cross-claim against FHB without prejudice. He did not elaborate. Dismissal without prejudice is when a case is dismissed but the plaintiff if allowed to re-file a new suit on the same claim in the future.

Flores is suing Union Bank and FHB for allegedly refusing to return the principal and interest earned on a time certificate of deposit amounting to $200,000 that he bought from the then Union Bank Saipan Branch in 1993. Flores is suing the two banks for breach of contract, unjust enrichment, negligence or gross negligence, breach of fiduciary duty, and fraud.

On Nov. 15, 2001, Union Bank reportedly sold all assets and liabilities of its Saipan branch office to FHB.

Last month, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted FHB's motion to dismiss Flores' all causes of action. Flores then filed a first amended complaint against the two banks.

Union Bank, formerly known as Union Bank of California, filed the cross-claim complaint against FHB for indemnification, and contributory fault and contribution.

Union Bank asked the court to hold FHB responsible for the payment of all damages claimed by Flores.

Frink said that if his client, Union Bank, is found liable to pay Flores any amount, the damages must be apportioned according to the respective liability of all of the parties in the lawsuit.

FHB then asked the court to dismiss Union Bank's cross-claim. FHB counsel Richard Johnson asserted that Union Bank's complaint for contribution must be dismissed "for failure to state a claim." Johnson said Union Bank's cross-claim presents no facts that supports the claim for indemnity.

The hearing on FHB's motion to dismiss was set for Wednesday. Attorney Juan T. Lizama, counsel for Flores, however, called the court requesting for the hearing to be postponed as he was not feeling well. This prompted the U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona to reset the hearing to yesterday.

Frink then filed yesterday the Union Bank's motion to dismiss its cross-claim. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy 15th birthday to Joseph Joshua Arthur Attao aka Son Son! May you continue to be blessed with lots of love, laughter, blessings and many more birthdays to come! We love you! Greetings come from your Mom and Dad, Catherine and Mark Toves, your siblings Markel, Theresa, Merrick, and Markus, and from your entire Chalan Piao family!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday greetings going out to Anthony Frankie Cabrera Celis! Wishing you many more birthdays to come and lots of love from your loving families.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

31st Annual
Flame Tree Arts Festival
10th ANNUAL FLAME TREE ARTS FESTIVAL
SATURDAY & SUNDAY
JUNE 1st & 2nd, 1991
Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture
20th Annual Flame Tree ARTS FESTIVAL 2001
American Memorial Park
April 20 • 6PM–12AM
April 21 • 7AM
April 21 • 9AM–1AM
April 22 • 9AM–8PM
Mobil
GALLERIA
30th Annual
Flame Tree ARTS FESTIVAL
Live performances • Artworks • Cultural demonstrations • And much much more!
Be A Part
promote, preserve & perpetuate your
CULTURE
CIVIC CENTER BEACH PARK • APRIL 20-22, 2012
Live Performances • Artworks • Cultural Demonstrations
And so much more!

Business

Report: Few states effectively track tax breaks

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (AP)—Most states are doing a poor job tracking whether their tax breaks for businesses are actually spurring job growth, including some that have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into corporate incentive programs even while grappling with record deficits, according to a new report.

The report released Thursday by the Pew Center on the States found that no state regularly takes a hard look at the effectiveness of all of its tax breaks. Twenty-five states and Washington, D.C., do little if any evaluation, including Illinois, which is among the states facing major budget struggles.

Only 13 were found to be doing enough, the study found.

It's difficult to say just how much U.S. states spend combined on tax incentives, but they've become more common in the past decade, particularly since 2008 when the country sank into recession. Unemployment rose and the money available for state budgets shrank, yet researchers found the tax breaks states handed out may not have produced the desired effect.

"Given that states are rebuilding their budgets and economies in the wake of the Great Recession, these are mistakes states can't afford to make," Pew senior researcher Jeff Chapman said.

Illinois, which is struggling with a multibillion-dollar budget deficit, has drastically increased its tax break commitments since the economy started to stall, offering $272.7 million in 2010, up from $63.7 million in 2006. It also has engaged in highly public—and costly—bids to retain major companies that have threatened to leave. It agreed last year to a package of $330 million in tax breaks for Sears Holding Corp. and two companies that operate Chicago financial exchanges, CME Group Inc. and CBOE Holdings Inc.

Marcelyn Love, a spokeswoman for Illinois' Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, defended the agency's evaluation process. She said companies applying for tax breaks through Illinois' primary incentives program have to have an outside audit showing they created the promised jobs before they receive the credit. The program, called EDGE, is only for companies threatening to leave the state.

Georgia, another of the 25 states that do little evaluation of their tax breaks, agreed this year to give Caterpillar about $75 million in incentives on a new plant the company plans to open.

World Bank trims China 2012 growth forecast

BEIJING (AP)—The World Bank cut its growth forecast for China on Thursday, adding to warnings the world's second-largest economy might be slowing too abruptly, and said Beijing should be ready to launch a new stimulus if needed.

The bank stressed it expects a "soft landing" but reduced its growth outlook to a still-robust 8.2 percent from 8.4 percent. It cited U.S. and European economic woes and Chinese lending and investment curbs imposed to cool an overheated economy.

Beijing is trying to steer growth that spiked to 10.4 percent in 2010 to a sustainable level without causing the economy to stall. Some analysts say it is succeeding, but others say government controls, coupled with last year's plunge in export demand, might cause growth to nosedive, raising the risk of job losses and unrest.

"While the prospects for a soft landing remain high, there are concerns that growth slows too quickly," the bank said in a quarterly report on China.

The Washington-based bank, which acts as a consultant to governments and lends to finance anti-poverty programs, said that if the downturn worsens, Beijing should be ready to cut taxes and step up social spending to shore up growth.

China's economic growth declined steadily throughout 2011 and fell to a 2 1/2-year low of 8.9 percent in the three months ending in December. Analysts expect a further decline in the first quarter of this year. Those data are due to be released Friday.

Import growth declined in March to 5.5 percent from 7.7 percent in the January-February period, indicating Chinese domestic demand is weakening.

Beijing reacted to the 2008 global crisis with a 4 trillion yuan ($586 billion) flood of spending and bank lending that helped China rebound quickly but left an aftermath of inflated housing prices and other problems.

A new stimulus "would need to be carefully crafted, keeping in mind longer-term effects and objectives," the World Bank said.

Natural gas below $2 for the first time in a decade

NEW YORK (AP)—The price of natural gas has fallen below $2 per 1,000 cubic feet for the first time in more than a decade, a remarkable decline for a commodity that not long ago was believed to be in short supply.

The U.S. supply of natural gas is growing so fast that analysts worry the country's underground storage facilities could be full by fall and lead to further price declines.

On Wednesday, the futures price of natural gas fell to $1.984 per 1,000 cubic feet, its lowest level since January 28, 2002, when it hit $1.91. If the price slides to $1.75, it would be the lowest since March 23, 1999.

Natural gas production has boomed across the country as energy companies employ new drilling techniques to tap previously untouched reserves. The process has raised concerns about water safety and has been banned temporarily in New York and New Jersey. But where it has been allowed, it has led to increases in drilling, job growth and production.

The falling price of natural gas has been a boon to homes and businesses that use it for heat and appliances, and for manufacturers that use it to power factories and make chemicals, plastics and other materials. Another benefit: Electricity costs are lower because natural gas is used to generate about a quarter of the nation's electric power.

From October through March, households spent $868 on average on natural gas, a decline of 17 percent from last winter. Those savings have helped relieve the burden of rising gasoline prices. Households spent $1,940 on gasoline from October through March, a 7 percent increase from the same period a year ago.

There is so much natural gas being produced—and still in the ground—that drillers, policymakers, economists and natural gas customers are trying to figure out what to do with it. Last year, the U.S. produced an average of 63 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day, a 24 percent increase from 2006. But over that period consumption has grown just half as fast.

COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORP. • COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS • Established October 2011

How is your baby growing?

If your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay, talk to your doctor, nurse, or other health care provider about it:

Developmental Health Watch
Birth to 3 Months

- Does not seem to respond to loud noises
- Does not notice hands by 2 months
- Does not follow moving objects with eyes by 2 to 3 months
- Does not smile at people by 3 months
- Cannot support head well by 3 months
- Does not reach for and grasp toys by 3 to 4 months
- Does not babble by 3 to 4 months
- Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
- Crosses eyes most of the time
  (occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months)
- Does not pay attention to new faces, or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

You may also contact the **Children's Developmental Assistance Center (C*DAC)** at **664-4830** for a **FREE** developmental screening!

Information adapted from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, Learn the Signs. Act Early.
Supported in part by project H25MC06112 from the MCHB (Title V, Social Security Act), HRSA, DHHS.

Big Steps for Little Feet

Nation

Murder charge brought in Trayvon Martin case

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—The neighborhood watch volunteer who shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was arrested and charged with second-degree murder Wednesday after months of mounting tensions and protests across the country.

George Zimmerman, 28, could get up to life in prison if convicted in the slaying of the unarmed black teenager.

Special prosecutor Angela Corey announced the charges but would not discuss how she arrived at them or disclose other details of her investigation, saying: "That's why we try cases in court."

Second-degree murder is typically brought in cases when there is a fight or other confrontation that results in death but involves no premeditation to kill. It carries a mandatory minimum of 25 years behind bars when a gun is used.

Martin's parents expressed relief over the decision to prosecute their son's killer.

"The question I would really like to ask him is, if he could look into Trayvon's eyes and see how innocent he was, would he have then pulled the trigger? Or would he have just let him go on home?" said his father, Tracy Martin.

Corey would not disclose Zimmerman's whereabouts for his safety but said that he will be in court within 24 hours, at which point he can request bail. He turned himself in in Florida.

Zimmerman's new attorney, Mark O'Mara, said Zimmerman will plead not guilty. The lawyer asked that people not jump to conclusions about his client's guilt and said he is "hoping that the community will calm down" now that charges have been filed. "I'm expecting a lot of work and hopefully justice in the end," he said.

On Tuesday, Zimmerman's former lawyers portrayed him as erratic and in precarious mental condition. But O'Mara said Zimmerman was OK: "I'm not concerned about his mental well-being."

Zimmerman, whose father is white and whose mother is Hispanic, has asserted since the Feb. 26 killing in Sanford that he shot in self-defense after the teenager attacked him. Martin's family argued Zimmerman was the aggressor.

The shooting brought demands from black leaders for his arrest, touched off protests in which people wore hooded sweatshirts like the one the teenager had on, and set off a furious debate over race and self-defense that reached all the way to the White House, where President Barack Obama observed: "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon."

Separately, the U.S. Justice Department's civil rights division is conducting its own investigation.

Corey said the decision to bring charges was based on the facts and the law, declaring: "We do not prosecute by public pressure or by petition."

One of the biggest hurdles to Zimmerman's arrest over the past month was Florida's "stand your ground" law, which gives people wide leeway to use deadly force without having to retreat in the face of danger.

AP

This combo made from file photos shows Trayvon Martin, left, and George Zimmerman. George Zimmerman, 28, the neighborhood watch volunteer who shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, was arrested and charged with second-degree murder Wednesday after weeks of mounting tensions and protests across the country. His attorney, Mark O'Mara, said his client would plead not guilty.

Second-degree murder means a killing that was not premeditated but resulted instead from an "imminently dangerous act" that showed a "depraved" lack of regard for human life.

Some legal experts had predicted the prosecutor would instead bring a charge of manslaughter, which carries up to 15 years behind bars. It is defined as a death that results from a reckless but not a depraved act.

Corey repeatedly declined to answer questions about details in the case.

"So much information got released on this case that never should have been released. We have to protect this prosecution and this investigation for Trayvon, for George Zimmerman," she said.

Legal experts said Corey must have compelling evidence against Zimmerman if she chose to charge him with second-degree murder.

"That indicates they have evidence (Zimmerman) was chasing Trayvon because he was black," said Florida defense attorney Richard Hornsby. "It's difficult to think how one prosecutor didn't charge him at all and another thought there was enough evidence to justify a second-degree charge. It's a pretty drastic swing."

Tensions have risen in recent days in Sanford, a town of 50,000 outside Orlando. Someone shot up an unoccupied police car Tuesday as it sat outside the neighborhood where Martin was killed. And a demonstration by college students closed the town's police station Monday.

ACROSS THE NATION

2 USC students from China fatally shot off campus

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Gunfire shattered the window of the BMW near the University of Southern California campus just after midnight, striking two Chinese graduate students inside. The driver was able to make it from the car, through the rain, to a house where he pounded on the door pleading for help. Ying Wu and Ming Qu, who police say were believed to have been dating, were dead by the time they got to the hospital Wednesday morning as police spread out looking for a killer suspected of bungling a carjacking.

Conn. legislature approves repeal of death penalty

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—After years of failed attempts to repeal the death penalty, Connecticut lawmakers in both the House and the Senate have passed legislation that abolishes the punishment for all future cases. As expected, members of the House voted 86 to 62 in favor of the bill after a floor debate that lasted nearly 10 hours on Wednesday. The legislation, which would make Connecticut the 17th state to abolish the death penalty, awaits a signature from Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, who has said he would sign the bill into law. "Going forward, we will have a system that allows us to put these people away for life, in living conditions none of us would want to experience," the Democratic governor said in a statement following the vote. "Let's throw away the key and have them spend the rest of their natural lives in jail."

Obama campaign ready for a 'ramping up' on Romney

WASHINGTON (AP)—For all the turmoil of the long primary season, President Barack Obama is right where he expected to be: taking on Mitt Romney and targeting him as a wishy-washy protector of the rich. With the November outcome likely to hinge on the economy, Obama will now engage more directly with the help of an experienced, well-financed campaign organization.

The campaign for the White House took on a decidedly different feel on Wednesday, a true two-man race for the first time. Yet even as Republican Rick Santorum's withdrawal a day earlier changed the dynamic, beginning the general election in earnest, the contours of the Romney-Obama race had already been becoming clear.

Both sides will keep pounding voters with ferocious arguments over who has the best vision for jobs, economic security and giving Americans a shot at a better life. In sharp and steady doses, directly or through aides, Obama and Romney will also accuse the other of being dishonest with voters and out-of-touch with their daily woes.

Everything gets faster and louder now.

Obama will pick his spots in targeting Romney directly until the election draws closer, needing to juggle the demands of his job and eager to remind everyone that he is the one who is already the president. Obama's Chicago-based campaign, meanwhile, will be working vigorously to challenge Romney and try to define him.

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Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
TRASH COLLECTION SERVICES
PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-001-12

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed bids for Trash Collection Services for a period of two years at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The scope of work entails providing trash collection services for the Airport as described in the scope of work. The bid package which includes the scope of work, draft agreement, and insurance requirements will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building beginning Wednesday, March 21, 2012. Bidders must submit all required documents listed in the scope of work. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Bidders shall also take into consideration all necessary badging requirements and fees for this project.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: *"Proposal for the Trash Collection Services at the Francisco C. Ada/ Saipan International Airport"*. One original and three (3) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than **2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2012**, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the bids will be publicly opened and read.

The apparent lowest bidder may be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and insurance requirements. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive and responsible," their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

A pre-bid conference will be held at the CPA Conference Room, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at 9:00 am, Wednesday, April 11, 2012, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. All prospective bidders are required to attend. Questions should be submitted to the Executive Director in writing at least 7 days prior to the pre-bid conference.

Each bidder must supply all information required by the bid proposal documents and specifications.

Contractor will be required to obtain insurance policies based on CPA's requirements. Copies of the insurance requirements may be obtained with the scope of work at the office of the Executive Director.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Invitation For Bids; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

CPA assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of offeror's preparation of the bid or supply under the contract. This IFB does not commit CPA to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for services.

All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Bids received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ EDWARD M. DELEON GUERRERO
Executive Director

March 19, 2012
Date

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-12-015

CALL CENTER SERVICES

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, Office of the Executive Director is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced firms to provide Call Center Services for CUC Departments and Operating Centers located on Saipan, Tinian and Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package and Scope-of-Work may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable deposit from the CUC Treasury Section by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $ 100.00 for one set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held on **April 19, 2012 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.10, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RFP-12-015, Call Center Services", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **May 9, 2012 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract.

The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services.

Offerors will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing no later than **April 23, 2012 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org; Janina Muna, Purchasing Administrative Assistant via email address mika.muna@cucgov.org with a copy to Charles Warren, CUC Chief Financial Officer via email charles_warren@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all offers and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

/s/ ABE UTU MALAE
Executive Director

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Twelfth CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Board Meeting on Monday, April 16, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. at the BOE Conference Room in Susupe, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary
- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Roll Call
- 3) Adoption of Agenda
- 4) Adoption of Minutes
  - a) March 01, 2012 Special Board Meeting

II. Public Comments[1]

III. Reports
- 1) Chair
- 2) Board Committees
  - a) FPA
  - b) ISA
  - c) LIA
  - d) CIP
  - e) Student Services & Parental/Community Programs
    - i. Student Representative
  - f) AD HOC
- 3) Commissioner of Education
  - i. Financial Matters
    - a. Federal
    - b. Local
  - ii. Head Start Program
  - iii. Other Matters

IV. Unfinished Business
- 1. School Calendar for SY 2012-2013
- 2. Wellness Policy (Proposed)
- 3. Dual Enrollment Policy (Proposed)

V. New Business
- 1. Head Start Program Matters
  - a. Head Start Program School Readiness Goals & Timeline
  - b. Head Start Program Community Assessment
  - c. Head Start Program Self-Assessment
  - d. Head Start Program Notices of Federal Interests
  - e. Head Start Program Basic Grant Application
- 2. Special Education Program
  - a. Part B (Special Education) Grant Application
  - b. Part B (Special Education) Revised Policies & Procedures
  - c. Part C (Early Intervention) Grant Application
  - d. Part C (Early Intervention) Revised Policies & Procedures
- 3. Whistle Blower Protection Policy (Proposed)
- 4. Praxis I Requirement For Specialized Instructors

VI. Executive Session[2]
- 1) Legal Updates
- 2) Personnel
- 3) Other matters

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

VIII. Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting

IX. Adjournment

[1] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

Asia

Fighter jets over Pyongyang as DPRK readies rocket

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP)—Fighter jets roared through the skies over downtown Pyongyang on Thursday as the world watched to see whether North Korea would defy international warnings and launch a long-range rocket over the Yellow Sea.

The five-day window for the launch of a rocket mounted with an observation satellite opened Thursday as North Koreans woke to details about developments at a Workers' Party conference where leader Kim Jong Un ascended to top posts and brought with him a new generation of officials.

His father, Kim Jong Il, was granted the posthumous title of "eternal general secretary" at the special one-day party conference Wednesday. The immortalization of the late leader provided a glimpse into how North Korea will handle the nation's second hereditary succession and indicates he will be honored much in the same way his father, Kim Il Sung, was made "eternal president" following his 1994 death.

Footage on state TV on Thursday showed Kim Jong Un seated at the front of the conference with white statues of his grandfather and a new statue of his father in his trademark khaki work ensemble, one arm on his hip. On Mansu Hill, once the domain of a huge bronze statue of Kim Il Sung, a second covered statue awaits its unveiling.

There was no word Thursday morning on the timing of the controversial rocket launch, which the North has said will take place sometime between Thursday and Monday. In 2009, a similar launch from an east coast site took place on the second day of a five-day window.

The United States, Japan, Britain and others say the launch would constitute a provocation and would violate U.N. Security Council resolutions banning North Korea from developing its nuclear and missile programs.

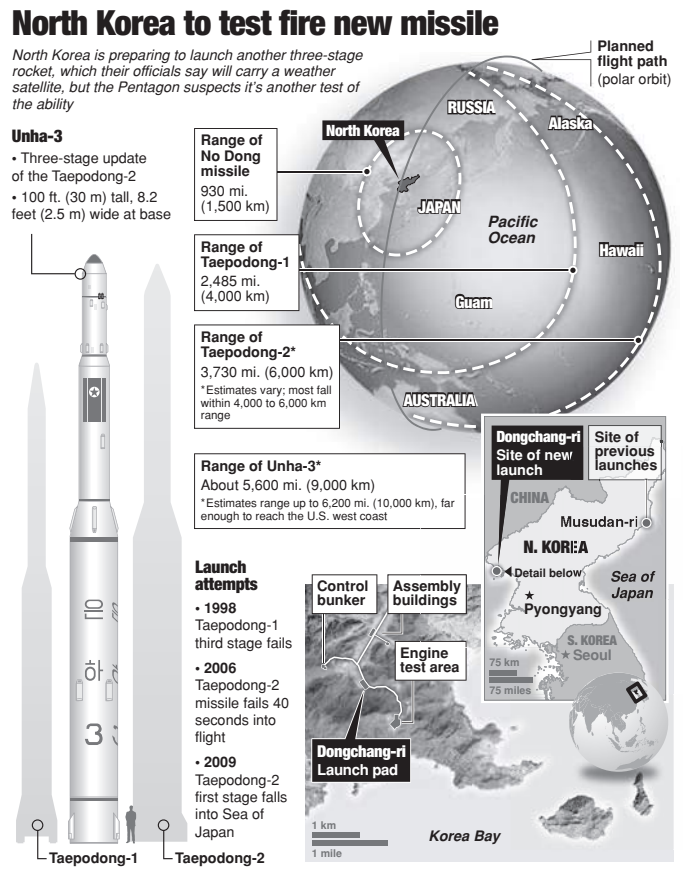
Experts say the Unha-3 carrier is similar to the type of rocket that could be used to fire a missile mounted with a nuclear warhead to strike the U.S. or other targets.

The launch and Kim's formal ascension to top posts comes during a week of events leading up to celebrations Sunday marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of his grandfather, late President Kim Il Sung.

The centennial is a major milestone in the nation Kim founded in 1948, and the streets of the capital, Pyongyang, were awash with new posters, banners and the national flag. The streets were busy with women clad in traditional Korean dresses and children waving red flags.

The Taedong River flyover of fighter jets was practice for a military parade, officials said. North Korea's army celebrates its 80th anniversary later this month.

The expected satellite launch is one of the marquee events this week. North Korean space officials call the launch of the Unha-3 rocket, mounted with an Earth observation satellite, a "gift" to Kim Il Sung. They said Wednesday that the final step of injecting fuel into the three-stage rocket was under way in the coastal hamlet of Tongchang-ri.


North Korea to test fire new missile
North Korea is preparing to launch another three-stage rocket, which their officials say will carry a weather satellite, but the Pentagon suspects it's another test of the ability
Unha-3
• Three-stage update of the Taepodong-2
• 100 ft. (30 m) tall, 8.2 feet (2.5 m) wide at base
Range of No Dong missile
930 mi. (1,500 km)
Range of Taepodong-1
2,485 mi. (4,000 km)
Range of Taepodong-2*
3,730 mi. (6,000 km)
*Estimates vary; most fall within 4,000 to 6,000 km range
Range of Unha-3*
About 5,600 mi. (9,000 km)
*Estimates range up to 6,200 mi. (10,000 km), far enough to reach the U.S. west coast
Launch attempts
• 1998 Taepodong-1 third stage fails
• 2006 Taepodong-2 missile fails 40 seconds into flight
• 2009 Taepodong-2 first stage falls into Sea of Japan
Planned flight path (polar orbit)
North Korea
RUSSIA
Alaska
JAPAN
Pacific Ocean
Hawaii
Guam
AUSTRALIA
Dongchang-ri Site of new launch
Site of previous launches
CHINA
Musudan-ri
N. KOREA
Detail below
Sea of Japan
Pyongyang
S. KOREA
Seoul
Control bunker
Assembly buildings
Engine test area
Dongchang-ri Launch pad
Korea Bay
Taepodong-1
Taepodong-2
Source: Federation of American Scientists, McClatchy Washington Bureau, Chicago Tribune
Graphic: Robert Dorrell
© 2011 MCT

Philippines, China eye compromise to end standoff

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine and Chinese diplomats scrambled Thursday to find a possible compromise to end a tense naval standoff in the disputed South China Sea that could save face for both sides and ease tensions.

Philippine officials proposed an arrangement to break the impasse at the Scarborough Shoal off the northwestern Philippines, where a Philippine warship tried to detain Chinese fishing boats but was stopped by two Chinese surveillance craft. The standoff entered a third day Thursday.

China, through its ambassador to Manila, Ma Keqing, was expected to respond to the proposal at the earliest on Thursday, when both sides were to resume talks, two Philippine officials said.

The officials, who were monitoring the talks, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the negotiations with the media.

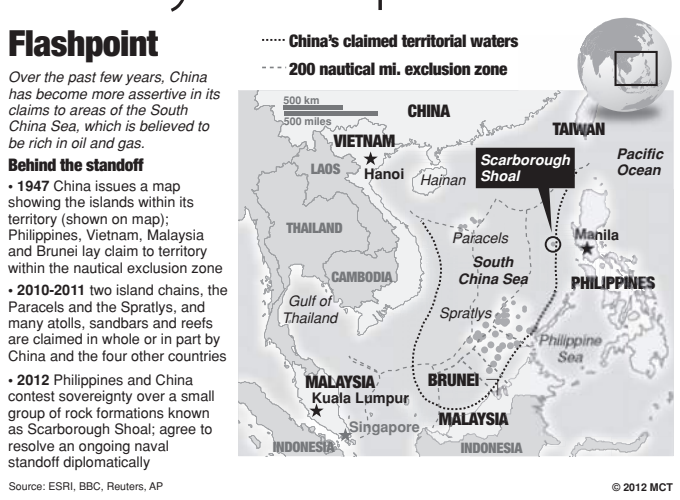
They did not give details of the proposal, but said it was a pragmatic way to solve the standoff. The Chinese fishermen were not expected to be able to stay at the uninhabitated shoal for a long time because they may run out of food and other provisions.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert Del Rosario said late Wednesday that he and Ma were working on a possible solution but declined to give details.

"We have an issue here that we're trying to address in a civilized and friendly way. I'm hopeful that our long-standing friendship will make us arrive at a diplomatic solution faster," he said.

While they worked toward a compromise, both China and the Philippines also flexed their muscles. Del Rosario said after the first round of talks Wednesday that he warned China's ambassador that "if the Philippines is challenged, we are prepared to secure our sovereignty."

The Chinese Embassy said the fishing boats had taken shelter from a storm in the lagoon and accused Philippine troops of harassment.


Flashpoint
Over the past few years, China has become more assertive in its claims to areas of the South China Sea, which is believed to be rich in oil and gas.
Behind the standoff
• 1947 China issues a map showing the islands within its territory (shown on map); Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei lay claim to territory within the nautical exclusion zone
• 2010-2011 two island chains, the Paracels and the Spratlys, and many atolls, sandbars and reefs are claimed in whole or in part by China and the four other countries
• 2012 Philippines and China contest sovereignty over a small group of rock formations known as Scarborough Shoal; agree to resolve an ongoing naval standoff diplomatically
China's claimed territorial waters
200 nautical mi. exclusion zone
500 km
500 miles
CHINA
TAIWAN
VIETNAM
Hanoi
LAOS
Hainan
Scarborough Shoal
Pacific Ocean
THAILAND
Paracels
South China Sea
Manila
PHILIPPINES
CAMBODIA
Gulf of Thailand
Spratlys
Philippine Sea
MALAYSIA
Kuala Lumpur
BRUNEI
Singapore
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA
INDONESIA
Source: ESRI, BBC, Reuters, AP
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Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Myanmar's president

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—The architects of political reconciliation in Myanmar, President Thein Sein and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, met Wednesday ahead of the Nobel peace laureate's historic entry into parliament.

The two were due to discuss democratization, parliamentary affairs and a peace process with ethnic rebels, said Nyan Win, a spokesman for Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy.

On her return to Yangon from the capital, Naypyitaw, Suu Kyi told reporters only that "it was a good meeting."

Suu Kyi has long fought for democratic rule against the former military regime, and spent about 15 years under house arrest for her efforts. Her party boycotted a November 2010 general election, saying it was unfair and undemocratic.

But when the former general and outgoing prime minister Thein Sein became president five months later, he began reforms easing the political landscape after almost five decades of military repression. To woo Suu Kyi's party, the election law was amended to meet its objections, and the NLD contested by-elections earlier this month.

It captured 43 seats to become the main opposition presence in parliament, which is overwhelmingly dominated by allies of the former military regime. They will take their seats when the next session of parliament opens April 23.

The polls were viewed as a milestone for Myanmar and an astonishing reversal of fortune for former political prisoner Suu Kyi.

Another key player in the process leading to political reconciliation, U.S. Sen. Jim Webb, on Wednesday praised Suu Kyi and Thein Sein.

"This movement toward reconciliation is ... propelled by the courage of two people who could not be more different in their backgrounds, their life experiences ... (They) started from very different points in their lives, have different life journeys but joined together in their resolve to set aside their differences for the good of this society," said Webb.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp

NOTICE OF SALE
UNDER POWER OF SALE
IN DEED OF TRUST

Anthony Francis A. Benavente and Arlene Tina Lee Benavente (collectively "Trustor"), on or about April 11, 2006, gave and delivered to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation ("Trustee"), acting on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Office ("USDA"), formerly known as Farmers Home Administration, United States of America ("FmHA"), a Deed of Trust upon certain real property hereinafter described, which Deed of Trust was recorded on April 12, 2006, under Document No. 06-895 to secure payment of a Promissory Note of the Trustor to the Trustee, acting on behalf of the USDA, Rural Development Office.

The Deed of Trust and this Notice of Sale affect the property hereafter described:

LOT NO. 011 G 1155, CONTAINING AN AREA OF 900 SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS, AS SHOWN ON DLS CHECK NO. 011 G. 23, DATED DECEMBER 09, 1993, RECORDED AT THE COMMONWEALTH RECORDER'S OFFICE AS FILE NO. 96-2566 ON OCTOBER 10, 1996 THE DESCRIPTION THEREIN BEING INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE.

The Trustor has defaulted on payment of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust, and by reason of said default, Trustee issued its Notice of Default and served to Trustor on November 3, 2011. More than thirty (30) days have passed since the default notice was served on Trustor and said default has not been cured.

Pursuant to 2 CMC § 4622(b)(2), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Trustee will, on **April 17, 2012**, at 10:00 a.m., at the office of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, Garapan, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, under power of sale contained in the Deed of Trust, sell the above described parcel of real property at public auction to the highest qualified bidder, to satisfy the obligations secured by said Deed of Trust. The minimum bid offer shall be not less than **$49,007.87**. Sealed bids will be opened at the auction and those present will be given the opportunity to submit an additional bid, thereby, outbidding the highest sealed bid amount received by NMHC and opened on the date of the auction.

Sealed bids must be addressed to Ms. Merced M. Tomokane, Chairperson of the Board, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 and must also be received no later than **April 16, 2012, at 4:00 p.m. All bids received from outside the Commonwealth must be received no later than April 16, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. Untimely sealed bids will be rejected.**

The sale shall be without warranty as to the title or interest to be conveyed or as to the property under the Deed of Trust, other than that the Trustee is the lawful holder of such Deed of Trust. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within three (3) calendar days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check, or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within three (3) calendar days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title, and interest in any of the aforementioned property will revert to NMHC.

Trustee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to cancel or extend the date, time and place for sale of such property. Any prospective buyer must be a person authorized by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to hold title to real property in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The further right is reserved, in the absence of satisfactory bids for the outright sale of the said parcel of real property to a qualified buyer, to offer such property at the same time and place, or at a later time, for long-term lease to any person on the usual terms and conditions for long term leases of real property offered by the Trustee to the highest bidder for such lease. The minimum bid amount of **$49,007.87** shall also apply with lump sum payment for the term of the lease.

The lease shall be without warranty as to the title or interest to be conveyed or as to the property under the Deed of Trust, other than that the Trustee is the lawful holder of such Deed of Trust. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the lease price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within three (3) calendar days of the auction sale. All lease payments must be made by cash, cashier's check, or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within three (3) calendar days will result in forfeiture by the buyer/lessee of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's/lessee's rights, title, and interest in any of the aforementioned property will revert to NMHC.

Dated this 14th day of March, 2012.

/S/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Acting Corporate Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
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NOTICE OF SALE
UNDER POWER OF SALE
IN DEED OF TRUST

Jose L. Castro and Margarita J. Castro (collectively "Trustor"), on or about December 22, 1980, gave and delivered to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation ("Trustee"), acting on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Office ("USDA"), formerly known as Farmers Home Administration, United States of America ("FmHA"), a Deed of Trust upon certain real property hereinafter described, which Deed of Trust was recorded on December 22, 1980, under Document No. 11179 to secure payment of a Promissory Note of the Trustor to the Trustee, acting on behalf of the USDA, Rural Development Office.

The Deed of Trust and this Notice of Sale affect the property hereafter described:

LOT NUMBER 017 D 27, AND CONTAINING AN AREA OF 900 SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED ON DRAWING/CADASTRAL PLAT NUMBER 4842, ON THE 11TH DAY OF September, 1975.

The Trustor has defaulted on payment of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust, and by reason of said default, Trustee issued its Notice of Default and served to Trustor on November 3, 2011. More than thirty (30) days have passed since the default notice was served on Trustor and said default has not been cured.

Pursuant to 2 CMC § 4622(b)(2), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Trustee will, on **April 17, 2012**, at 10:00 a.m., at the office of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, Garapan, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, under power of sale contained in the Deed of Trust, sell the above described parcel of real property at public auction to the highest qualified bidder, to satisfy the obligations secured by said Deed of Trust. The minimum bid offer shall be not less than **$51,076.14**. Sealed bids will be opened at the auction and those present will be given the opportunity to submit an additional bid, thereby, outbidding the highest sealed bid amount received by NMHC and opened on the date of the auction.

Sealed bids must be addressed to Ms. Merced M. Tomokane, Chairperson of the Board, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 and must also be received no later than **April 16, 2012, at 4:00 p.m. All bids received from outside the Commonwealth must be received no later than April 16, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. Untimely sealed bids will be rejected.**

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Trustee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to cancel or extend the date, time and place for sale of such property. Any prospective buyer must be a person authorized by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to hold title to real property in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The further right is reserved, in the absence of satisfactory bids for the outright sale of the said parcel of real property to a qualified buyer, to offer such property at the same time and place, or at a later time, for long-term lease to any person on the usual terms and conditions for long term leases of real property offered by the Trustee to the highest bidder for such lease. The minimum bid amount of **$51,076.14** shall also apply with lump sum payment for the term of the lease.

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Dated this 14th day of March, 2012.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Acting Corporate Director

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PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that on November 28, 2011, Remedios C. Macayan, an immediate family member of Alice I. Concepcion of NMHC, applied for assistance under the HOME Program.

Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of low-income persons intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. Ms. Alice I. Concepcion is not and shall not be involved in the handling of this loan application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable HOME Program conflict regulations. Any comments should be submitted to NMHC on or before April 23, 2012.

Dated this 11th day of April, 2012.

/S/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Acting Corporate Director

Panic but no tsunami from strong Indonesia quakes

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia (AP)—Cries of panic and fervent prayers rang out Wednesday as Indonesians rushed toward high ground after two strong earthquakes raised fears of a killer tsunami.

Alerts were raised as far away as Africa and Australia but this time the big waves didn't come.

In western Indonesia, distraught women ran into the streets clinging to crying children as back-to-back tsunami warnings revived memories of the 2004 disaster that claimed 230,000 lives in nearly a dozen countries. Others screamed "God is great" as they poured from their homes or searched frantically for family members.

"God! What have we done to deserve this?" one mother screamed as residents around her piled into cars and onto the backs of motorcycles. "What sins have we committed?"

Two deadly tsunamis in the last decade—the most recent off Japan just one year ago—have left the world much better prepared.

Sirens sounded along coastlines and warnings spread like wildfire by mobile phone text messaging. Though often chaotic, evacuations began immediately, with streets clogged with traffic, especially in Aceh province, where 170,000 people were killed in 2004.

Patients were wheeled out of hospitals, some still lying in their beds with drips attached to their arms. And at least one hotel guest was slightly injured when he jumped out of his window.

Countries all along the Indian Ocean—from Australia and India to as far off as Africa—received alerts from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii saying they should prepare for the possibility of seismically charged waves.

Hour later the tsunami warnings were lifted, and damage from the tremors was minimal—something experts attributed to the unique nature of the fault line.

The only wave to hit was less than 30 inches (80 centimeters) high, rolling to Indonesia's emptied coastline.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the first 8.6-magnitude quake was a shallow 14 miles (22 kilometers), striking in the sea 270 miles (435 kilometers) off Aceh's coast—making it the sixth-largest temblor in the last half-century.

Just as the region was sighing relief, an 8.2-magnitude aftershock followed, again causing only slight damage.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Attacks kill 2 NATO troops, local Afghan official

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Two bomb explosions and an insurgent attack killed two NATO service members and a local Afghan government official on Wednesday in different parts of Afghanistan, authorities said. The deaths come one day after Taliban suicide bombers killed at least 19 people across the country as they stepped up their fight against Afghan forces slowly taking the lead from U.S. and international troops. NATO said both coalition service members were killed in the south—one in a roadside bombing and the other during an insurgent attack. The coalition did not provide their nationalities nor disclose other details.

Bus collides with truck in east China, killing 23

BEIJING (AP)—A state news agency says at least 23 people were killed when a bus collided head-on with a truck in eastern China in the latest serious accident on the country's chaotic roads. Xinhua News Agency says the accident happened Thursday morning in Suzhou city in Anhui province. It says the truck was carrying a load of sand when the collision happened. Xinhua says no immediate cause of the accident was given by police. The number of passengers on the bus is also not known.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp

AUCTION NOTICES

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC), as auctioneer and seller, hereby gives notice that all the rights, title and interests of NMHC in and to the following described real property will be sold at auction:

LOT NO.:	003 D 16	ADETFA ST., GARAPAN	**MINIMUM BID :**	$ 90,000.00
LOT NO.:	011 G 308	CHOPAK DRIVE, KAGMAN III	**MINIMUM BID :**	$ 43,619.36
LOT NO.:	010 K 05	MAGICIENNE BAY AVE., DAN DAN	**MINIMUM BID :**	$ 42,219.36
LOT NO.:	21899-2	PILA DRIVE SADOG TASI	**MINIMUM BID :**	$ 32,419.36
LOT NO.:	002 G 263	ATES DRIVE KAGMAN II	**MINIMUM BID :**	$ 57,619.36
LOT NO.:	011 G 842	GAGU STR. KAGMAN	**MINIMUM BID :**	$ 61,619.36
LOT NO.:	001 C 57	MORTAR LANE SAN ROQUE	**MINIMUM BID :**	$ 68,230.00
LOT NO.:	003 B 16	CHAMOLINAN DRIVE, TANAPAG	**MINIMUM BID :**	$ 48,519.36

The auction will be open to the general public and will be held at NMHC's conference room, Garapan, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. on April 17, 2012, subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Minimum Bid. The minimum acceptable bid for each property shall be $(please see above).
2. Reserve. The auction sale shall be held with reserve.
3. Rights and Duties of NMHC as Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable law of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, NMHC shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale:
   a. To withdraw any property listed for sale in this announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted.
   b. To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is struck off, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
   c. To reject any and all bids.
4. Bids. Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in this notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the item. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Mr. Jesse S. Palacios, Acting Corporate Director, NMHC, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; Telephone: 234-6866; Facisimile: 234-9021; or to Law Office of Vicente T. Salas, P.O. Box 501309, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 234-7455, Fax: 234-7256.
5. Deposit; Payment. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale by cash, cashier's check or credit card (Visa or Mastercard). The remaining balance will be due within three (3) calendar days of the auction sale. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within three (3) calendar days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will automatically revert to NMHC.
6. Change of Terms. NMHC reserves the right to change any of the terms of conduct and enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.
7. Inspection and No Warranty. Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property. The interests of NMHC in the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property or any related documents will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.
8. Lease with Option to Purchase. NMHC gives notice that it will also consider bids or offers to lease the property, subject to the following additional terms and conditions:
   a. The Lease Price bid shall not be less than the listed Minimum Bid price.
   b. An up-front payment of ten percent (10%) of the Lease Price must be paid upon award by cash, cashier's check or credit card (Visa or Mastercard).
   c. The balance of the Lease Price shall accrue interest at six percent (6%) per annum.
   d. Monthly payments of the Lease will be considered rental payments only and not installments toward purchase and shall not grant the lessee any equity or ownership interest in the property or be construed in any way to encumber NMHC's rights, title and interest in the property beyond the granting of a lease for a specific term of years.
   e. Maximum acceptable Lease term shall be thirty (30) years.
   f. A lease agreement will be given upon receipt of the up-front payment and shall include:
      i. No alterations or improvements without the prior written consent of NMHC.
      ii. Lessee to insure property and improvements during the Lease term.
      iii. Lessee responsible for all utilities and other charges associated with the property.
      iv. Lease not to be assigned or mortgaged without prior written consent of NMHC.
      v. Failure to make a monthly payment grounds for termination and eviction.
      vi. Lease may, at the request of lessee, contain an Option to Purchase provision exercisable upon: (A) payment in full of the Lease Price; (B) the Lease not having been declared to be in default; and (C) payment of $100.00 option consideration. If the option is properly exercised, a quitclaim deed will be given.
   g. In the event of competing lease bids, greater weight will be given to the leasehold offer with the better price, shorter term and larger monthly payments.

Dated this 14th day of March, 2012.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios, Acting Corporate Director
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 • Tel.: (670) 664-2375 • Fax: (670) 664-2408

INVITATION TO BID
ITB12-GOV-058
Phase III, Hardening and Renovation of the Juan A. Sablan Administration Building – Office of the Attorney General, Capitol Hill Saipan

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lieutenant Governor Eloy S. Inos, are soliciting sealed bids for the **Hardening and Renovations of the Juan A. Sablan Administration Building – Office of the Attorney General, Capitol Hill Saipan,** Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

The project package will be available Tuesday, March 27, 2012 at the Governor's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Administrator's Office, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill. A $25.00 non-refundable fee for the project package will be assessed. All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, as revised through May 24, 2001. Public Law 15-95 Local Preference Act, as amended by Public Law 15-118 does not apply to this Federally funded project. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be a **mandatory pre-bid Conference/Site Visit** for this project on Wednesday, April 4, 2012, 9:00AM ChST at the project site, Capitol Hill, Saipan. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 PM ChST April 6, 2012 to Mr. Carl Castro, Project Coordinator, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, or faxed to (670) 664-2408.

Sealed bids must be marked **"ITB12-GOV-058"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 AM ChST April 24, 2012. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 10:00 AM ChST April 24, 2012, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than April 24, 2012 and must be received no later than May 03, 2012 ChST. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 AM ChST May 4, 2012. However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will opened at 11:00 AM ChST April 24, 2012.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00) a bid bond of fifteen percent (15 %) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. This security may be a Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". Surety companies must hold a certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the CNMI Attorney General.

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price. The surety company providing the Performance and Payment bonds must posses a certificate of authority to conduct business in the CNMI and certification that the value or its unencumbered assets (exclusive or all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the amount or each bond. Performance time for completion of this project is two hundred ten (210) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be greater of (i) two hundred dollars ($200.00), or (ii) two percent (2%) of the contract price divided by two hundred ten **(210)** calendar days, the contract time and will be assessed as delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ ELOY S. INOS, Lieutenant Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Procurement and Supply, DOF

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.: (670) 664-2375 • Fax: (670) 664-2408

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS
FOR ROTA HARBOR PLANNING SERVICES

RFQ12-GOV-071

The Office of the Mayor and Rota Legislative Delegation are soliciting statements of professional qualifications ("RFQ") from engineering firms to prepare a feasibility study and conceptual design for the development of the East Harbor, on the Island of Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Island of Rota has a long history of an unsafe harbor entrance and berthing area that has hampered shipping and economic development. The legislative delegation of the Island of Rota seeks to explore the feasibility of the development of the Rota East Harbor in order to provide long-term solution to these issues.

Interested engineering firms are invited to submit statements of professional qualification. Proposals will be evaluated on experience and information presented in the following five areas:

1. Harbor planning, analysis, and design experience (25%);
2. Harbor construction permitting experience including but not limited to environmental assessment; United States Army Corps of Engineers; and local agency reviews (25%).
3. Financial and economic analysis experience (25%)
4. Proposed approach (25%)
5. Cost estimate for identified services (0%)

Proposals should address each item identified in the evaluation structure and must follow the proposal structure as identified in the proposal packet that can be obtained from the Office of Procurement & Supply. Proposal packets will be available on April 17, 2012 at Office of Capital Improvement - Juan Sablan Memorial Building - Capitol Hill (670-664-2375). All questions regarding the RFQ must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. on April 25, 2012 to the Office of Capital Improvement via fax to (670-664-2408).

This procurement is controlled by the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Procurement Regulations as contained in Title 70 of the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code. Selected contractor will be required to comply with all applicable Commonwealth and federal laws. All proposals must be sealed and marked RFQ12-GOV-071, Rota Harbor Feasibility Study" and include an original and five copies and must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, May 22, 2012 (ChST)to:

Herman S. Sablan, Director
Marianas Procurement & Supply - Lower Base
P.O. Box 510008 CK
Saipan, MP 96950

Proposers located outside the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of Intent to Propose. Notice of Intent to Propose must identify firm; proposal number; location of registered corporate office of firm; identify intent to propose, be signed by authorized individual, and must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 4:30 pm May 21, 2012 (ChST) via facsimile (670-664-1515) or email at procurement@pticom.com For proposers located outside the CNMI, proposals must be postmarked by the United States Postal Service or the official government postal service of the site of corporate offices no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, May 22, 2012 (ChST) and must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 4:30 p.m. May 29, 2012 (CHST). Proposers bear all risk concerning providing proper notice and delivery. The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualifications for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest. For further information contact the Office of Capital Improvement 670-664-2375.

/s/ Eloy S. Inos, CNMI Lt. Governor

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Procurement and Supply

World

Syria says it will stop fighting by UN deadline

BEIRUT (AP)—Syria promised to comply with a U.N.-brokered cease-fire beginning Thursday but carved out an important condition—that the regime still has a right to defend itself against the terrorists that it says are behind the country's year-old uprising.

The statement Wednesday offered a glimmer of hope that a peace initiative by special envoy Kofi Annan could help calm the conflict, which has killed some 9,000 people. But the regime still has ample room to maneuver.

In comments carried on the state-run news agency, Syria said the army has successfully fought off "armed terrorist groups" and reasserted state authority across the country.

"A decision has been taken to stop these missions as of the morning of Thursday, April 12, 2012," the statement said, adding: "Our armed forces are ready to repulse any aggression carried out by the armed terrorist groups against civilians or troops."

The government denies that it is facing an uprising by Syrians who want to dislodge the authoritarian family dynasty that has ruled the country for more than four decades. Instead, the regime says, terrorists are carrying out a foreign conspiracy to destroy Syria.

AP

This image made from amateur video and released by the Syria media center Wednesday, March 21, 2012, purports to show a Syrian military solider atop a tank in Damascus, Syria.

Because the regime has treated any sign of dissent as a provocation, there are only dim hopes for an abrupt end to the bloodshed.

The White House cautioned that President Bashar Assad's regime has reneged on promises to stop the violence in the past.

"What is important to remember is that we judge the Assad's regime by its actions and not by their promises, because their promises have proven so frequently in the past to be empty," White House spokesman Jay Carney told reporters in Washington.

Annan is scheduled to brief the U.N. Security Council on Thursday by videoconference from Geneva.

Many activists predict that huge numbers of protesters would flood the streets if Assad fully complies with the agreement and pulls his forces back to barracks. But Syria has ways to maintain authority even without the military, in the form of pro-regime gunmen called "shabiha" and the fiercely loyal and pervasive security apparatus.

Over the course of the uprising, the military crackdown succeeded in preventing protesters from recreating the fervor of Egypt's Tahrir Square, where hundreds of thousands of people camped out in a powerful show of dissent that drove longtime leader Hosni Mubarak from power.

In the early days of the Syrian rebellion, Syrian forces used tanks, snipers and machine guns on peaceful protesters, driving many of them to take up arms. Since then, the uprising has transformed into an armed insurgency. Many fear the conflict could soon become a civil war.

The rebel Free Syrian Army, a fighting force determined to bring down Assad, has said it will abide by the cease-fire Thursday. But the opposition is not well organized, and there are growing fears of groups looking to exploit the chaos.

Annan said Wednesday that he is hopeful both sides will abide by their agreement.

"We've been in touch with them (Syrian rebels) and have had positive answers from them," Annan said, speaking on a visit to Iran. "We should see a much improved situation on the ground."

Western powers have pinned their hopes on Annan's plan, in part because they are running out of options. The U.N. has ruled out any military intervention of the type that helped bring down Libya's Moammar Gadhafi, and several rounds of sanctions and other attempts to isolate Assad have done little to stop the bloodshed.

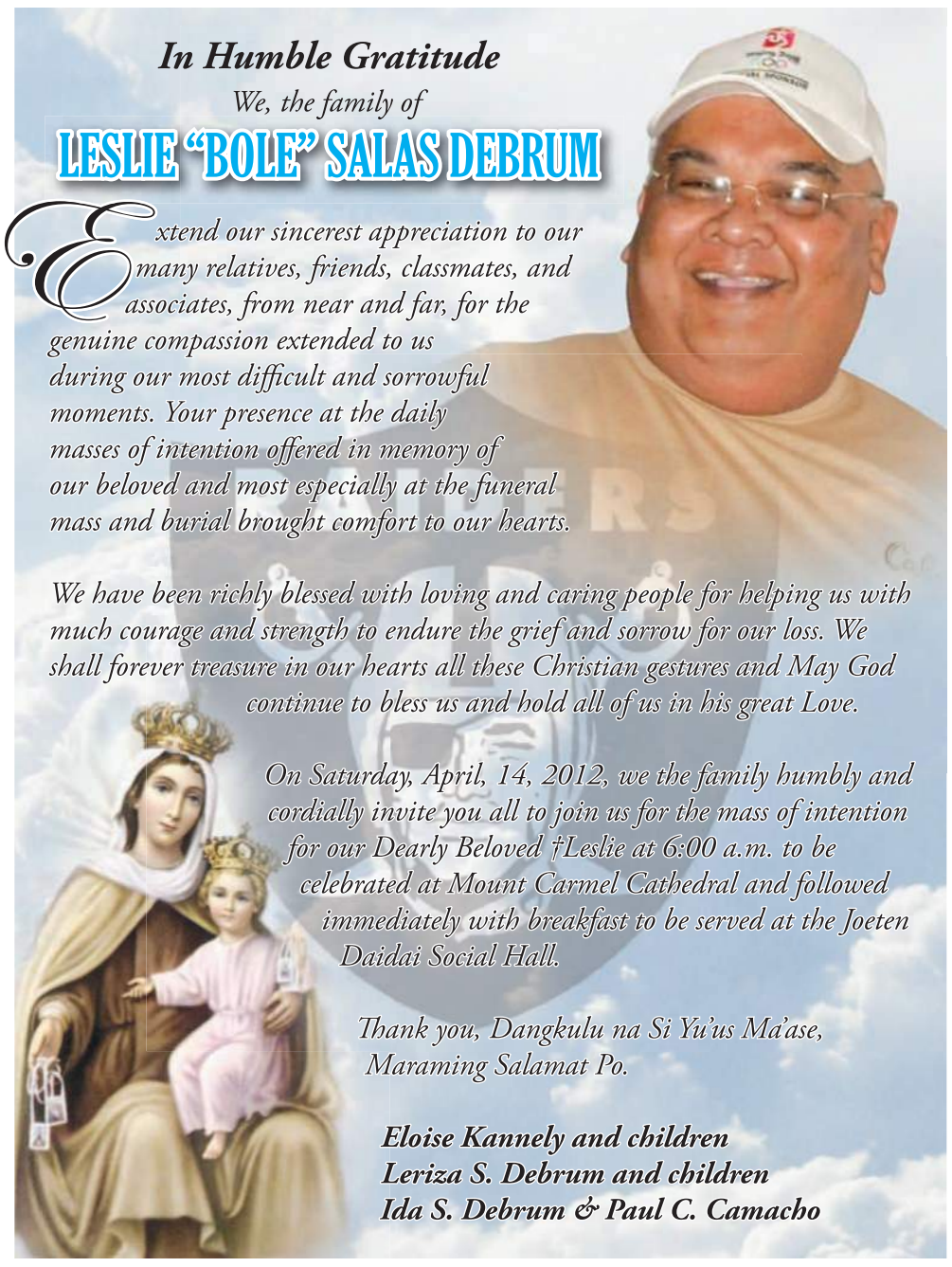
"The West or Arab states have very little leverage over Syria, and the one thing which would certainly weaken the regime—which is some form of military intervention—is the one policy that is not being considered," said David Hartwell, senior Middle East analyst at the defense and intelligence group IHS Jane's.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar have called for arming the rebels, but even if they follow through there is no guarantee that such efforts could cripple Assad's well-armed regime.

Asked what steps the U.S. could take if the deal collapses, Carney, the White House spokesman, cited humanitarian and other non-lethal assistance and further sanctions.

The conflict is among the most explosive of the Arab Spring, in part because of Syria's web of allegiances to powerful forces including Lebanon's Hezbollah and Shiite powerhouse Iran.

Annan's peace plan called for Syria to withdraw its forces on Tuesday, followed by a full cease-fire by 6 a.m. Thursday. The halt in fighting would then pave the way for an observer mission and talks between both sides over the country's future.


In Humble Gratitude
We, the family of
LESLIE "BOLE" SALAS DEBRUM
Extend our sincerest appreciation to our many relatives, friends, classmates, and associates, from near and far, for the genuine compassion extended to us during our most difficult and sorrowful moments. Your presence at the daily masses of intention offered in memory of our beloved and most especially at the funeral mass and burial brought comfort to our hearts.
We have been richly blessed with loving and caring people for helping us with much courage and strength to endure the grief and sorrow for our loss. We shall forever treasure in our hearts all these Christian gestures and May God continue to bless us and hold all of us in his great Love.
On Saturday, April, 14, 2012, we the family humbly and cordially invite you all to join us for the mass of intention for our Dearly Beloved †Leslie at 6:00 a.m. to be celebrated at Mount Carmel Cathedral and followed immediately with breakfast to be served at the Joeten Daidai Social Hall.
Thank you, Dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Maraming Salamat Po.
Eloise Kannely and children
Leriza S. Debrum and children
Ida S. Debrum & Paul C. Camacho

Peruvian miners tell of anguish, hope inside mine

YAUCA DEL ROSARIO, Peru (AP)—Peruvian miners trapped for six days in an abandoned copper mine prayed and wept during moments of intense anguish, then told each other jokes and even danced to hold onto hope before they finally walked free Wednesday.

The miners, ranging in age from 23 to 58, walked out without assistance about an hour after dawn from a reinforced tunnel that rescuers had built as they removed more than 26 feet (8 meters) of dirt and rock.

"On the second day, we were saying that they weren't going to get us out, that we were going to die in there," said Santiago Tapia, 21, the youngest of the miners. Tapia spoke with The Associated Press at the Social Security Hospital in Ica, where all the miners were taken to recover from dehydration.

"Inside, we prayed, we cried. We also cried with our relatives outside who were desperate," said Tapia, the father of a 2-year-old daughter.

Other moments were lighter. "We conversed, we told each other jokes, talked about our lives, things that had happened to us," Tapia said. "We also talked about politics, a bit of everything. We made ourselves laugh so we wouldn't feel bad inside there."

The miners wore sunglasses and were covered with blankets when they walked free. President Ollanta Humala was there to greet them after spending the night at the mine 150 miles (240 kilometers) southeast of the capital of Lima.

The miners were trapped by a cave-in triggered by an explosion they themselves had set.

They had communicated with rescuers through a hose, in place before the collapse, by which they also received food and medicine during their ordeal in a horizontal shaft dug into a mountainside.

It became their lifeline. "Thanks to that hose we are now still alive," Tapia said.

"It's pretty ugly inside," said fellow miner Edwin Bellido. "We slept on the ground on muddy plastic."

On the first day, miners grew desperate when one of their companions became ill, Bellido said.

WORLD BRIEFS

Yemen: Fighting in south kills 50 militants

SANAA, Yemen (AP)—Yemeni artillery and military aircraft backing pro-government tribesmen pounded al-Qaida fighters trying to battle their way into a strategic town in the country's south on Wednesday, while a suspected U.S. airstrike killed at least 12 militants, officials said. The fighting near the town of Lawder started over the weekend when al-Qaida attacked an army post, sparking resistance from Yemeni troops and from armed residents. The military claims that at least 165 militants have been killed in the past three days, including 38 on Wednesday, as al-Qaida continues a costly but determined assault aimed at expanding a swath of the south under their control. The officials said six civilians fighting alongside the army were also killed.

Grass dismisses Israeli travel ban

BERLIN (AP)—Guenter Grass says Israel's decision to bar him from visiting the country because of his poem criticizing the Jewish state reminds him of similar steps that dictatorial governments have taken against him. Previously the German literature Nobel laureate has only been barred from entering a nation by then Communist-ruled East Germany and the military junta in Myanmar about 25 years ago, Grass said in a reaction piece published by German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung on Wednesday. Grass, 84, said the tone of Israel's announcement on Sunday reminded him of the reasoning then given by spy minister Erich Mielke of East Germany, or GDR.

Off The Wall

Nude maid service raising eyebrows in Texas city

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP)—Police in this staunchly conservative West Texas city are keeping close tabs on a young entrepreneur's recently opened cleaning service that offers nude maids.

Lubbock police Sgt. Jonathan Stewart said the owner of Fantasy Maid Service of Lubbock doesn't have a permit to operate a sexually oriented business and officers are watching for any violation, which would bring a $2,000 fine.

But owner Melissa Borrett insists she's not operating such a business. Customers pay $100 an hour for one maid or $150 an hour for two maids, and no touching is allowed, she said.

"I run a maid service," the 26-year-old entrepreneur said. "We really just clean houses. These girls are not performers. They're maids."

The West Texas native and mother said she started the business about a month ago because she was struggling as a waitress to make ends meet. She had even been living at the Occupy Lubbock encampment near Texas Tech University's campus in Lubbock.

"I just decided to go a little bigger, work a little smarter," she said.

Her business model isn't unique, but the city's ordinance requires all sexually oriented businesses to apply for a permit, which costs $650 a year, and to post a $5,000 surety bond or letter of credit.

Such businesses are defined as any commercial venture whose operations include "providing, featuring or offering of employees or entertainment personnel who appear in a state of nudity, seminude or simulated nudity and provide live performances or entertainment" intended to sexually stimulate or gratify customers "and which is offered as a feature of a primary business activity of the venture."

Stewart wouldn't say how police planned to keep tabs on the maid service, and Borrett said she would hire an attorney to fight any attempt by the city to shut her down.

So far, Borrett said, business has been good and she is now busy interviewing to hire more maids. She currently has three on staff. She offers a regular discount to government employees and law enforcement, and an ad posted Friday on the online bartering site Craigslist offered 20 percent discounts for Easter weekend.

If requested, the maids would clean fully clothed, but the cost is the same.

"It is kind of pricey, but we're fantasy maids," Borrett said.

Ga. Aquarium expecting rare beluga whale birth

ATLANTA(AP)—The world's largest aquarium is expecting the pitter patter of giant fins. The Georgia Aquarium has a rare beluga whale pregnancy, the first mammal to conceive at the downtown Atlanta attraction since it opened in 2005.

AP

Georgia Aquarium's resident pregnant beluga whale Maris swims in the aquarium's tank in Atlanta, Wednesday, April 11, 2012.

The mother, Maris, got pregnant naturally—not through insemination—which is rare for belugas in captivity. Maris, whose midsection is bulging and sometimes ripples as the baby moves in her womb, is being monitored round-the-clock as she gets closer to the end of her 14-month pregnancy. She is expected to give birth by June to a calf that could be up to 50 pounds.

Newborn calves often don't survive with first-time mothers, but aquarium officials are working to train Maris on how to nurse and care for the baby.

"It's all in an effort to desensitize her so when the birth is ongoing, it's nothing out of the ordinary for her," said William Hurley, chief animal officer at the aquarium.

They've plopped divers in the cold-water tank at 3 a.m. to help get her accustomed to visitors in the middle of the night in case she goes into labor after hours. They've begun leaving dim lights on in the tank at night so that Maris, who is used to darkness, isn't bothered by the change.

Hurley said they're training her to present her mammary glands to different objects so that she's more likely to nurse the baby.

On Wednesday morning, trainers worked with Maris on presenting her large belly, which is useful in conducting ultrasounds and doing other medical checkups. She swam from one side of the large tank to the other, playing games with the trainers and chirping happily as they gave her treats.

Just six North American facilities house belugas, and just a handful are born each year. The Shedd Aquarium in Chicago also has a pregnant beluga whale.

The number of successful births has increased in the last decade as aquariums and other facilities learn more about the whale pregnancies, Hurley said. The Georgia calf's father is Beethoven, the first beluga whale to be born in captivity.

"We can learn half of what we need to know about dolphins and whales by studying them in the wild," Hurley said. "But the other half the puzzle...we can only do those things here."

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Austrian thieves make off with 2 tons of coffee

VIENNA (AP)—In a heist that could fill the mother of all bottomless cups, thieves in Austria have made off with 2 tons of coffee. Police say the culprits broke into a wholesaler and coffee-roaster's warehouse east of Vienna, loaded a stolen van with the goods and then drove off. A police statement issued Tuesday put the value of the vehicle and its contents at more than 55,000 euros—$72,000. The thieves also took two coffee machines with them.

Scots deploy taste testers to sample gas leak fish

LONDON (AP)—Scotland has called in taste testers to sample the fish found near the site of Total's North Sea gas leak, an unusual gastronomic exercise intended to provide reassurance to Scottish seafood lovers. The government says specially trained "sensory testers" at the Aberdeen, Scotland-based Marine Scotland Science organization sniffed and tasted seven different species of fish collected near Total's leak-stricken Elgin platform earlier this week. Scottish Environment Secretary Richard Lochhead announced their verdict Wednesday in a statement on the government's website. "They are untainted by hydrocarbons," he said.

Spanish village may still grow pot to pay debt

MADRID (AP)—An adviser to a Spanish village that had considered growing marijuana to pay off debt may still do so, even though 'yes' votes in a referendum prevailed but fell short of the minimum set by the mayor. The people of Rasquera in the northeast Catalonia region voted 56 percent in favor and 44 percent against in Tuesday's referendum. The mayor had set 75 percent as the minimum level of support, and said he would resign if this were not achieved. Now he is apparently backtracking. Mayor Bernat Pallisa said Wednesday he is delaying any decision.

NC town's chief can't shoot, loses gun and badge

RICHLANDS, N.C. (AP)—The police chief of a North Carolina town has been prohibited from carrying a badge and gun because he couldn't shoot straight. Police Chief Thomas Bennett was suspended as a law enforcement officer after failing his recent annual firearms qualification exam. The Daily News of Jacksonville reports that Bennett has been police chief in Richlands, near the Atlantic coast, since 1999 and plans to retire in July. Bennett's suspended certification also means he cannot turn on the blue lights on a police cruiser or make a traffic stop.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN, MP 96950-1055 • Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

AMENDED NOTICE TO BIDDERS

SEALED PROPOSALS for **RESTROOM REPAIRS AND WATER PUMP IMPROVEMENTS** at the **FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, COMMONWEALTH OF NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, AIP 3-69-0002-62/65/67 (CPA-SA-002-09),** will be received at the office of the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY, Francisco C. Ada / Saipan International Airport, PO Box 501055, Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950.

All bids will be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Saipan International Airport Restroom Repairs and Water Pump Improvements, AIP 3-69-0002-62/65/67 (CPA-SA-002-09)" and submitted no later than **2:00 p.m., FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2012**, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read.

The project, in general, consists of two (2) groups: Project 1 is existing restroom repair such as replacement of doors, plumbing fixtures, floor and wall tiles, ceilings, and all toilet accessories; mechanical fixtures; electrical fixtures; replacement of the existing hydro-pneumatic tank; mechanical rehabilitation and replacement of the existing water pump motor and controls, all in accordance with the Plans and Specifications, and Project 2 is a Design-Build of Restroom I in accordance with the Design/Build Concept Plans and Specifications. Bidders are reminded that the Construction Management (CM) team is not available for design services for Project 2.

The Project is being financed by funds from U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and Commonwealth Ports Authority. The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within sixty (60) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for ninety (90) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

The contract period for construction of the project in its entirety shall be **THREE HUNDRED SIXTY (360) CALENDAR DAYS**. Liquidated damages of **FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS ($500.00)** shall be assessed the contractor for each calendar day the completion of the project is delayed beyond the contract completion date without excuse.

The apparent low bidder may be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, and bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive or responsible", their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

All mechanics and laborers on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section GP-70-25 of the specifications.

Each bidder must complete, sign, and furnish the "Bidder's Statement on Previous Contracts Subject to EEO Clause", a "Certification of Nonsegregated Facilities", and the "Assurance of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Participation", as contained in the bid proposal documents, with the submission of the Bid Proposal.

A CD-Rom containing the bid proposal and contract documents including plans and specifications, may be obtained at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, upon the payment of **ONE HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS ($150.00)** for each set of plan documents in electronic form (CD) including the bid schedule. This payment is nonrefundable. Payment shall be made in cash, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

A pre-bid conference will be held at the CPA Conference Room, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, ~~**10:00 AM, FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 2012**~~, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. All prospective bidders are required to attend. Questions should be submitted to the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to the pre-bid conference.

Each proposal shall be on a form furnished by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The bidders are required to use the bid schedule form on the CD-Rom. The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or misenter the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

The proposed contract is under and subject to Executive Order 11246, as amended by Executive Order 11375 dated October 13, 1977, and Section 60-1.4(b) of the regulations of the Secretary of Labor (41 CFR 60-1) as implemented by Section 152.61 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, and to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Federal Labor provisions.

All labor on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rates established by CNMI Law or Federal Law, whichever is higher. The Contractor shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract.

Each bidder must supply all information required by the bid proposal documents and specifications.

The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications, and bid proposal documents are available for inspection at the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

A contractor having 50 or more employees and any subcontractor having 50 or more employees and who may be awarded a contract of Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) or more, will be required to maintain an affirmative action program, the standards for which are contained in the specifications. To be eligible for award, each bidder must comply with the affirmative action requirements.

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award of any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement.

Women will be afforded equal opportunity in all areas of employment. However, the employment of women shall not diminish the standards or requirements for employment of minorities.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either a bid bond by US Treasury listed surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount not less than **TEN PERCENT (10%)** of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The proposed contract is under and subject to the foreign trade restrictions required by 49 CFR Part 30, Denial of Public Works Contracts to Supplier of Goods and Services of Countries that Deny Procurement Market Access to U.S. Contractors.

The Aviation Safety and Capacity Expansion Act of 1990 provides that preference be given to steel and manufactured products produced in the United States when funds are expended pursuant to a grant issued under the Airport Improvement Program

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/s/ JOSE R. LIFOIFOI
Chairman of the Board/Contracting Officer

Date: April 10, 2012

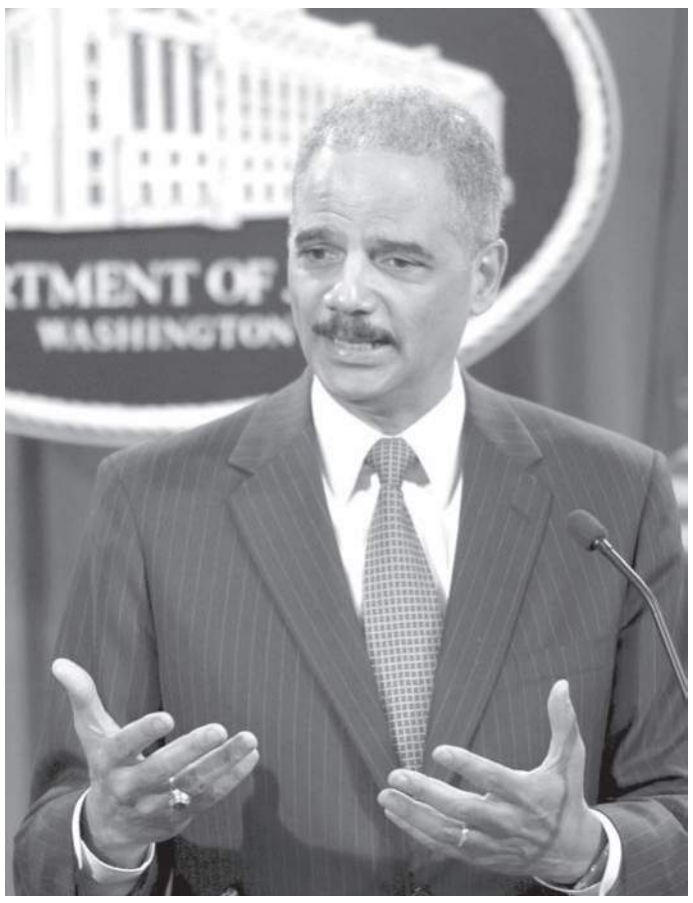
Science & Technology

US sues to lower prices of e-book best-sellers

WASHINGTON (AP)—The government says avid best-seller readers who use electronic books have been getting ripped off. Tina Fey's "Bossy Pants," Tim Tebow's "Through My Eyes" and Keith Richards' "Life"—maybe they should have cost less.

The Justice Department and 15 states sued Apple Inc. and major book publishers Wednesday, alleging a conspiracy that raised the price of electronic books. They said the scheme cost consumers more than $100 million in the past two years by adding $2 or $3, sometimes as much as $5, to the price of each e-book.

If there was price fixing, even the e-book version of the hot-selling Walter Isaacson biography of Steve Jobs, the late genius behind Apple computers, may have cost too much.



AP

Attorney General Eric Holder listens during a news conference at the Justice Department in Washington, Wednesday, April 11, 2012.

Attorney General Eric Holder said executives at the highest levels of the companies conspired to eliminate competition among e-book sellers. Justice's antitrust chief, Sharis Pozen, said the executives were desperate to get Amazon.com—the marketer of Kindle e-book readers—to raise the $9.99 price point it had set for the most popular e-book titles, because that was substantially below their hardcover prices.

The federal government reached a settlement with three of the publishers, Hachette, HarperCollins and Simon & Shuster. But it will proceed with its lawsuit in federal court in New York City against Apple and Holtzbrinck Publishers, doing business as Macmillan, and The Penguin Publishing Co. Ltd., doing business as Penguin Group.

Connecticut and Texas, two of the 15 states filing a separate lawsuit, reached agreements with Hachette and HarperCollins to provide $52 million in restitution to consumers, using a formula based on the number of states participating and the number of e-books sold in each state. Other states in the case may sign onto the agreement, and other companies might be persuaded to join.

Susan E. Kinsman of the Connecticut attorney general's office said it's too early to say how consumers can go about getting refunds. But there could be millions of people applying. A recent Pew Research Center survey found that 21 percent of adults said they had read an e-book in the last year.

Since Amazon introduced the Kindle in 2007, e-book sales have surged. They represented just 2 percent of all titles sold in the United States that year, but soared to 25 percent last year. In 2010, about 114 million e-books were sold at a total cost of $441.3 million.

Holder told a Justice Department news conference that "we believe that consumers paid millions of dollars more for some of the most popular titles" as a result of the alleged conspiracy. Pozen said the scheme added an average of $2 to $3 to the prices of individual e-books.

Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen said the individual book markups went as high as $5 and the total cost to consumers was more than $100 million since April 2010, when the scheme allegedly took effect.

The government lawsuits did not disclose individual titles whose prices were allegedly jacked up. The Fey, Tebow, Richards and Isaacson books all came out in electronic versions from the named publishers after April 2010.

According to Pozen, Apple's Steve Jobs told publishers involved in the alleged conspiracy that "the customer pays a little more, but that's what you want anyway."

The lawsuit said the effort to get e-book prices increased by Amazon.com came as Apple was preparing to launch the iPad. The government said the conspirators agreed that instead of selling books to retailers and letting them decide what retail price to charge, the publishers would convert the retailers into "agents" who could sell their books but not alter the publisher-set retail price. The scheme called for Apple to be guaranteed a 30 percent commission on each e-book it sold, the lawsuit said.

Google tweaks Plus social network for ease of use

NEW YORK (AP)—Google is tweaking its social network, Google Plus, to make it easier to use and to distinguish it from rival Facebook.

The most visible change is a new navigation ribbon on the left side of the Google Plus page with icons for the most used features, such as games, photos and your personal profile. Hover over an icon to do specific tasks, such as add photos from your phone or an online album.

You can reorder the features in the ribbon and hide the ones you don't use often.

The changes, announced Wednesday, are designed to help Google Plus adapt more easily to growth—and to make room for new features in the future.

In a blog post, Google calls the ribbon "an obvious (and clutter-free) space for The Next Big Feature, and The Feature After That."

Google Inc. CEO Larry Page has made Google Plus the centerpiece of his effort to tie all of the company's services together. Google is worried that Facebook has been carving out a competitive advantage by stockpiling valuable information about people's social circles and interests. The data has given Facebook the means to target ads precisely and deliver content tied to a user's hobbies and tastes.

Google said Google Plus has attracted more than 170 million users since its debut nine months ago. That lags Facebook's 845 million user count, but it's far greater than Facebook's tally at that stage in its history.

Google Plus has yet to hold most users' attention. Visitors have been spending an average of just a few minutes per month on the network, compared with six to seven hours on Facebook, according to the research firm comScore Inc.

The new design could help Google retain users by making the experience more pleasant. The navigation ribbon, for instance, offers users more flexibility than Facebook in customizing a page.

Among the other changes:

- An easier way to build a community around content you post. You can see those who have reposted your photo or link and those who have endorsed it by hitting the "Plus One" button.
- A "Hangouts" icon on the navigation ribbon makes it easier to find and join group video chats, including those with strangers.
- An "Explore" option on the navigation ribbon, which points you to content that's most popular and talked about.

Google Plus users will see the latest changes this week. Some features that were available before will become more prominent with the redesign.

PC turned into Internet 'bot'

By STEVE ALEXANDER
STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)

QUESTION: We received an e-mail from Comcast's Xfinity Internet service that said our PC may be infected with "bot" software, which we hadn't heard of before. But I can't tell that there's anything wrong.

Comcast is requesting that we let them use software to remove the bot that will cost us $360. Is there another way?—Bob Busch, Eden Prairie, Minn.

ANSWER: Bot (as in robot) software takes over your computer and makes it follow instructions from some scam artist on the Internet.

For example, a PC that's been turned into a bot could run a phony phishing website that tricks other people into giving it valuable personal information. Or it might steal your online passwords as you type them, or use your PC to send mountains of spam.

Because there are no outward signs that anything is wrong, literally hundreds of thousands of computers have been taken over without their owners' knowledge. (The recently discovered Flashback bot took over half a million Macintosh computers.) These groups of compromised computers, called "botnets," quietly carry on their illicit business.

Comcast probably spotted the bot software because there was a large amount of Internet traffic leaving your computer.

Without knowing which bot software is involved, it's hard to say whether it will be difficult to remove. But before I paid Comcast $360, I'd try the free Malwarebytes Anti-Malware program. Find it at http://www.tinyurl.com/6my24hx and click "download now.) To avoid potential interference from the bot software, I suggest you download, install and run Malwarebytes on a flash drive.

■■■

Q: I have an HP Pavilion dv8 laptop that keeps losing its Wi-Fi connection. I usually have to reset the adapter on the PC, but that only lasts for a while. I've seen online that other people have had the same problem. What can I do?—Anthony Williams, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

A: It's probably a laptop electrical issue, which is not something the average person should try to fix.

Fortunately there's an inexpensive solution: turn off the PC's internal Wi-Fi and buy a Wi-Fi adapter that fits into your PC's USB port. Adapters cost as little as $14.

■■■

Q: I have photos clogging my Mac and PC. What software is best for getting rid of duplicate pictures?—Joann Angle, Lakeland, Minn.

A: For PC software that helps eliminate duplicate photos, see http://www.tinyurl.com/crsk3o8.

For Mac software, see http://www.tinyurl.com/6udnazm or http://www.tinyurl.com/7bzpmpe.

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Minneapolis Star Tribune. *Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.*

Saving money on wireless bills

By REID KANALEY
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Growing wireless bills can be a drain on the budget at home and at work. There are still ways to cut the cost of staying connected, but it takes some planning and diligence.

ADD SOME APPS

Tricks and tips for using apps such as Google Voice, Skype, and any of various messaging applications to circumvent cellphone carrier charges for overseas calling and high-volume texting, among other functions, are part of this post at Mint.com, a site for managing your money. This and many sources of advice on the subject urge people to check out pay-as-you-go and smaller wireless carriers for bargains the big companies can't or won't try to beat.

- http://bit.ly/njYyPg

LOOK FOR A BIG-BOX DISCOUNT

Consumer Reports details ways to trim the bill, starting with shopping for a phone at a discount store such as Wal-Mart or at an electronics retailer. Other strategies include checking out the smaller cell-phone companies, and, once you're on a plan, making sure to utilize Wi-Fi connections whenever possible to limit excess data charges.

- http://bit.ly/HiYLQC

GET A FAMILY

This advice at YoungMoney.com is for folks who wouldn't necessarily think of themselves as part of a family. Get some friends together to go in on a family wireless plan and cut costs all around. The caveats are to pick your friend-family carefully, since you'll be tied together for a couple years. A deadbeat or someone who moves around a lot could be a liability.

- http://bit.ly/HjvkCJ

GET EMPLOYEES TO PAY

What about business phones? TechRepublic.com goes over some money-saving options for business managers to help companies reduce wireless bills. The posting says some businesses have decided to make employees responsible for having and paying for their own cell phones, just like at-home land lines.

- http://tek.io/dKK7sD

ZERO USE

Companies with big wireless bills often are stuck paying for more cell-phone lines than they actually use, because it's hard to keep track. Tmcnet.com has this post on finding and canceling "zero-use" accounts.

- http://bit.ly/Ae5ceG

Axl Rose declines induction into Rock Hall

NEW YORK (AP)—The acrimony that helped dissolve Guns N' Roses nearly 20 years ago still lingers.

Axl Rose announced Wednesday that he won't be showing up to see the band inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and declined the honor for himself.

In a letter to the hall, band fans and "To Whom It May Concern," Rose listed several reasons for not attending Saturday's ceremony in Cleveland, including a feeling that the hall does not respect him.

In declining his own induction, he added: "I strongly request that I not be inducted in absentia and please know that no one is authorized nor may anyone be permitted to accept any induction for me or speak on my behalf."

The hall said in a statement that it still plans to induct Rose with the rest of the group. "We are sorry he will not be able to accept his induction in person," it said.

According to the rock hall only the Sex Pistols have declined induction before.

Although Rose now fronts a reconstituted version of Guns N' Roses that does not include former members Slash, Izzy Stradlin, Duff McKagan or Steven Adler, some held out hope that the band might reunite at the hall.

Even Slash seemed to leave an opening for the possibility.

"I have no idea what's going to happen on that day," he said in an interview with The Associated Press last month. "It's more like going into it with blinders on and just see what happens."

But Rose apparently was miffed by such talk.

"There's a seemingly endless amount of revisionism and fantasies out there for the sake of self-promotion and business opportunities masking the actual realities," he wrote.

He added: "So let sleeping dogs lie or lying dogs sleep or whatever. Time to move on. People get divorced. Life doesn't owe you your own personal happy ending especially at another's, or in this case several others', expense."

A rep for Slash said he would still attend Saturday but had no further comment. Green Day is scheduled to induct the group.

Rose admitted that when it was first announced that the band would be inducted, he had mixed feelings. But "I was honored, excited and hoped that somehow this would be a good thing. Of course, if Guns N' Roses were to be inducted it'd be somewhat of a complicated or awkward situation."

Rose's announcement cast a cloud over the band's induction but in some ways was fitting, given the dysfunction that marked the group as it became one of the world's most popular acts in the 1980s and 1990s. Its hits included "Welcome to the Jungle," "Sweet Child O' Mine" and "November Rain."

Besides Guns N' Roses, the inductees will include the Beastie Boys, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the late singer/songwriter Laura Nyro, Donovan, and The Faces/The Faces, which included Rod Stewart and Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood.

'Battleship' leads attack of game-based movies

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Battleship" steams into movie theaters overseas this week, giving international audiences the first chance to decide whether a board game-based movie is sea-worthy.

AP

In this film publicity image released by Universal Pictures, from left, John Tui, Taylor Kitsch and Rihanna are shown in a scene from "Battleship."

The Hasbro Inc. search-and-destroy game was once a way for kids to while away a summer afternoon. But as it debuts in Europe on Wednesday, "Battleship" the movie has become a potential franchise, sporting Michael Bay-inspired special effects, aliens invading Earth, a bikini-model actress, superstar Rihanna and, of course, lots of guns.

Whether the movie symbolizes Hollywood's lack of new ideas or its brilliance in adapting old ones, Comcast Corp.'s Universal Pictures is betting big that it's the latter. With a reported production budget of $200 million, observers say it will need to reap at least $500 million at box offices worldwide to pay off.

Hollywood's love of the sequel, the prequel, the reboot and the adapted novel all originate from the same premise: Moviegoers are more likely to buy a ticket if they are already familiar with the story. But not since "Clue" bombed in 1985 has Tinseltown gambled on adapting a popular board game with no apparent storyline.

The idea of turning board games into movies has gained new traction in part because of the huge success of "Transformers," and to a lesser extent "G.I. Joe," which are both based on toys from toymaker Hasbro Inc. The three "Transformers" movies have grossed more than $2.6 billion worldwide, helping lift "Transformers" toys to become Hasbro's top-selling brand last year, exceeding 11 percent of its $4.3 billion in annual revenue.

For Hasbro, the movie is a way to get a globally marketed boost for its games business, which Sterne Agee analyst Margaret Whitfield called "stagnant" and lacking innovation. Turning that stagnation around is a goal of Brian Goldner, Hasbro's CEO since 2008. He told investors in February "we're going to reignite our games business."

If it succeeds, "Battleship" will be the advance guard of a whole fleet of planned adaptations of Hasbro games including "Ouija," also being developed by Universal for release in 2013, as well as "Risk" and "Candy Land," which are both in the works at Sony Corp. "Stretch Armstrong," a movie based on the glutinous-armed toy from Hasbro, is set for 2014 release by Relativity Media.

On paper, "Battleship" scores high on the checklist for blockbuster success: a hero in a life-or-death struggle against incomparable odds, a steamy love interest, a star-studded cast that includes Liam Neeson, and a whole lot of destruction and mayhem.

Marketing of the film borrows heavily on its successful predecessor, and trailers proclaim that the movie is "From Hasbro the company that brought you Transformers." Churning metal weaponry and explosions are unmistakably reminiscent of the special effects used in "Transformers," which was directed by Michael Bay.

"It reeks of `Transformers,' which is all a good thing," says Gene Del Vecchio, an entertainment research consultant and author of "Creating Blockbusters: How to Generate and Market Hit Entertainment for TV, Movies, Video Games and Books."

The movie also has "built-in appeal" with parents who feel nostalgic about the game and want to pass it on to their children, he says.

AP: Mellencamp unhappy with Gov. Walker

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Liberal rocker John Mellencamp wants Republican Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker to know he supports collective bargaining and union rights and says Walker should be aware of that before using his song "Small Town" on the campaign trail.

Mellencamp's publicist Bob Merlis told The Associated Press on Wednesday that he sent Walker's campaign an email not asking him to stop using the song, but to inform him of Mellencamp's beliefs.

"He's a very liberal person," Merlis said of the singer. "He appeared at the Democratic National Convention in 2004. His wife at the time was a delegate at large. He's very pro-collective bargaining and the fight for a living wage."

Merlis said he sent an email to Walker's campaign spokeswoman Ciara Matthews. She did not immediately return a message to AP seeking comment.

Walker faces a June 5 recall election that was motivated over anger related to his proposal passed last year that effectively ended collective bargaining rights for most public workers. Walker embarked Tuesday on a six-city campaign swing across Wisconsin, and Merlis said he read a news story that mentioned he played "Small Town" while in Milwaukee.

The song, a fond look back at Mellencamp's own upbringing in Indiana, was a top ten hit in 1985. Walker was born in Colorado Springs, Colo., but was raised in the small Wisconsin city of Delavan, where about 8,500 people currently live.

Politicians for years have been using rock songs on the campaign trail, and Mellencamp has found himself crossways with candidates before.

Mellencamp contacted Republican presidential hopeful John McCain in 2008 when he was using "Our Country" on the campaign trail. Just as he did with Walker's campaign, Merlis wrote McCain's camp a letter explaining Mellencamp's liberal leanings and that he supported Democrat John Edwards at the time.

McCain stopped using Mellencamp's songs after the letter was sent.

"Small Town" and "Pink Houses" are two of the most frequently used Mellencamp songs by politicians, Merlis said.

"More often than not it's right wing candidates who use his songs, which is somewhat paradoxical," Merlis said.

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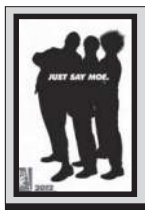

Three Stooges

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	9:30
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10	
Monday thru Thursday		4:10	7:10	

Will Sasso, Sean Hayes, Chris Diamantopoulos
Comedy • Rated PG

Synopsis

Peter and Bobby Farrelly finally get around to doing their take on the Three Stooges with this 20th Century Fox production. From a script they penned with Mike Cerrone (Me, Myself & Irene), the brothers' comedic take on the trio will not be a biopic, but rather a sampling of new slapstick adventures set in the present day. Will Sasso and Sean Hayes are set to play Curly and Larry respectively.

The Cabin In The Woods

Friday		4:15	7:15	9:55
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	9:55
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:15	
Monday thru Thursday		4:15	7:15	

Richard Jenkins, Bradley Whitford
Thriller • Rated R

Synopsis

A group of friends head to a cabin in the far reaches of the wilderness for some vacation fun, but they end up getting something completely different in this MGM horror flick. Cloverfield scribe Drew Goddard takes a seat in the director's chair for the first time for this film that he and Joss Whedon wrote together. Kristen Connolly, Chris Hemsworth, Anna Hutchison, Fran Kranz, and Jesse Williams head up the ensemble cast, which also includes Richard Jenkins and Bradley Whitford.

★ ★ ★

American Reunion

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:45
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	9:45
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Monday thru Thursday		4:05	7:05	

Jason Biggs, Alyson Hannigan
Comedy • Rated R

Wrath Of The Titans

Friday		4:20	7:20	9:35
Saturday	1:20	4:20	7:20	9:35
Sunday	1:20	4:20	7:20	
Monday thru Thursday		4:20	7:20	

Sam Worthington, Liam Neeson
Fantasy • Rated PG 13

Mirror Mirror

Friday		4:30	7:30	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:30	7:30	
Monday thru Thursday		4:30	7:30	

Julia Roberts, Lily Collins
Fantasy • Rated PG

The Hunger Games

Friday		4:00	7:00	10:00
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	10:00
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Monday thru Thursday		4:00	7:00	

Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson
Science fiction • Rated PG 13

21 Jump Street

Friday		4:25	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:25	
Monday thru Thursday		4:25	7:25	

Jonah Hill, Channing Tatum
Comedy, Action • Rated R

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Family looks for gentle way to ease away from grandpa

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married for 16 years and have two teenagers. "Mom" died two years ago, and my husband is an only child. How can we tell my widowed father-in-law that we need a weekend to ourselves?

"Pop," who's 87, lives an hour away and drives to see us every weekend, staying until Monday afternoon. We don't doubt that he's lonely, although he does play bridge twice a week and has dinner with friends occasionally. We love him dearly and would never want to hurt his feelings, but we long for a weekend for "just us."

How do we ask Pop not to visit? We believe he's still in mourning over the loss of his wife of 60 years. We don't want to add to his heartache.

TORN IN TEXAS

DEAR TORN: You do need to talk to your father-in-law and set some boundaries. Accomplish it by setting a predetermined visitation schedule that allows you time alone with your husband and nuclear family without him being present. A way to get that message across would be to say: "Pop, we love you, but we need some time to ourselves, so let's schedule your visits for twice a month. YOU pick the weekends."

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: The neighbor above my apartment has a snoring problem. My bedroom is directly below his. Around 10 every night he starts snoring to the point that it sounds like an elephant lives above me. I have to sleep with my TV on and sometimes the radio.

Please tell me what to do. Should I confront this neighbor? Should I complain to management? Or should I just live with it?

FED UP IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR FED UP: Write your neighbor a letter and explain to him there is a problem. He may not know that he snores. If he's snoring steadily, but stops for 20 or 30 seconds before starting again, it could indicate that he has a serious medical condition that should be discussed with his doctor.

If the apartment above you has poor insulation, a carpet under his bed could muffle some of the sound. Playing a tape of "white noise" could block it out more restfully than your television or radio. Or, because adequate sleep is so important, you could ask a real estate attorney about the possibility of breaking your lease and leaving without penalty.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a 23-year-old woman who will graduate from college soon. I am looking to undergo a post-college makeover. I want to find some clothes that will work in the professional world, but also mix for more casual environments. Taking a recent college grad's budget for this into account, what signature pieces should a young female have in her wardrobe? And what tips do you have for building a great collection over time?

YOUNG, BROKE, BUT FABULOUS

DEAR Y.B.F.: Start with two suits—one with a jacket and matching skirt, the other with jacket and slacks. Make both suits interchangeable and in a neutral color—black, navy or beige—whatever looks best on you. Add a couple of blouses and sweater sets, several pairs of shoes and a good handbag. Make sure to look for "classic" styles rather than trendy, and you will have the basis for a business wardrobe and the beginning of a great collection.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Joshua Ledet earns standing ovation on 'Idol'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Joshua Ledet ran ahead of the competition on "American Idol."

The booming 20-year-old singer from Westlake, La., had the Fox singing competition's judges on their feet Wednesday for his lively rendition of Bruno Mars' up-tempo tune "Runaway Baby." After Ledet's routine, which featured a horn section and go-go dancer, Randy Jackson told him it was "another unbelievable performance" and he's got everything going for him.

"You can sell a song like a work of art," beamed Steven Tyler.

Other singers who pleased the panel during the evening of tunes from 2010 to the present included 18-year-old country rocker Skylar Laine of Brandon, Miss., accompanying herself on guitar with Kellie Pickler's "Didn't You Know How Much I Loved You," and 16-year-old vocalist Jessica Sanchez of San Diego with Jazmine Sullivan's passionate "Stuttering."

"Jessica, every time I hear you sing, I forget where I am," Tyler said.

"Idol" mentor Jimmy Iovine laid down a gauntlet between 20-year-old rocker Colton Dixon, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., and 21-year-old pawn shop worker Phillip Phillips of Leesburg, Ga. Dixon delivered an emotional take on Skylar Grey's version of the Eminem and Rihanna hit "Love the Way You Lie," while Phillips failed to flourish with Maroon 5's "Give a Little More."

"It was just a little bit underwhelming for the Phillip Phillips I love," said Jennifer Lopez.

After landing in the bottom three last week, 28-year-old teacher Elise Testone, of Charleston, S.C., bounced back by closing the show with Lady Gaga's "You and I," and perfection continued to evade demure 18-year-old singer Hollie Cavanagh of McKinney, Texas. The show's judges weren't wowed by Cavanagh's rendition of Pink's "Perfect."

"It wasn't perfect, but it's a lot better than where you were last week," said Jackson.

Between the individual performances, the seven finalists paired up for two duets and a trio: Phillips and Testone got together for "Somebody That I Used to Know" by Gotye; Laine and Dixon crooned "Don't You Wanna Stay" by Jason Aldean and Kelly Clarkson; and Cavanagh, Ledet and Sanchez took on "Stronger" by first-season "Idol" champion Kelly Clarkson.

The finalist with the fewest viewer votes will face elimination Thursday.

AP

In this April 4, 2012 photo released by Fox, Joshua Ledet performs on the singing competition series "American Idol," in Los Angeles.

In a May 20, 2010 file photo, singers Marc Anthony and Jennifer Lopez arrive for the amfAR Cinema Against AIDS benefit during the 63rd Cannes international film festival, in Cap d'Antibes, southern France.

AP

Marc Anthony files for divorce from Jennifer Lopez

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Marc Anthony has made his breakup from Jennifer Lopez official by filing for divorce months after the superstar couple announced their separation.

The Latin crooner filed his petition Monday in Los Angeles. He cited irreconcilable differences but did not put additional details of the split, including the date he and Lopez separated, in the filing.

The former couple announced they were ending their marriage in June after seven years. They have twin children together, and Anthony is seeking joint custody.

The pair had been a high-profile couple and maintained a business relationship even after their announcement, appearing in the reality television series "Q'Viva!" and promoting it together.

Anthony's marriage to Lopez was his second. She had been married twice before when the couple wed in June 2004.

Anthony has delved into acting and producing in recent years, and appeared in the 2006 film "El Cantante" with Lopez.

Lopez has seen her career rebound since joining "American Idol" as a judge. She released an album titled "Love?" last year.

Police say no crime occurred in Whitney Houston's death

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Police have closed their investigation into Whitney Houston's death without finding any evidence to suggest it was anything than an accidental drowning, investigators announced Wednesday.

The Beverly Hills Police Department did not release a detailed report on the case, but Lt. Mark Rosen said the conclusion came after detectives reviewed the complete findings of the coroner's office. Coroner's officials ruled Houston drowned accidentally at the Beverly Hilton on Feb. 11 and that heart disease and cocaine use contributed to her death.

Beverly Hills authorities also released a minute-long 911 call made by a hotel worker who summoned police and paramedics to Houston's suite at the hotel. The call revealed few details, other than that people in the Grammy-winning singer's room repeatedly hung up on hotel personnel after discovering Houston in a bathtub.

The dispatcher had asked to be patched into the room to deliver lifesaving instructions, but the security worker said that wasn't possible. He said a woman who notified the hotel that Houston was unresponsive was "irate" and didn't provide many details. Rosen re-iterated condolences to Houston's family and friends in a brief statement.

Houston's death on the eve of the Grammy Awards stunned the world. The singer had been attempting a comeback and had finished work on a remake of the film "Sparkle" when she drowned.

Toxicology results showed cocaine throughout her body, and coroner's officials said the results indicated chronic use. In the bathroom, investigators found a small spoon described by investigators as having a "crystal-like substance" in it, and they discovered a white powdery substance in a drawer, a coroner's report released last week showed.

Houston had a history of drug abuse which marred her career, robbing her of her voice and reputation, but family and friends described her as intent on returning to glory in the months before her death. Her unexpected death at age 48 sparked a renewed interest in her music and movies, sales of which will benefit her only daughter, Bobbi Kristina.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

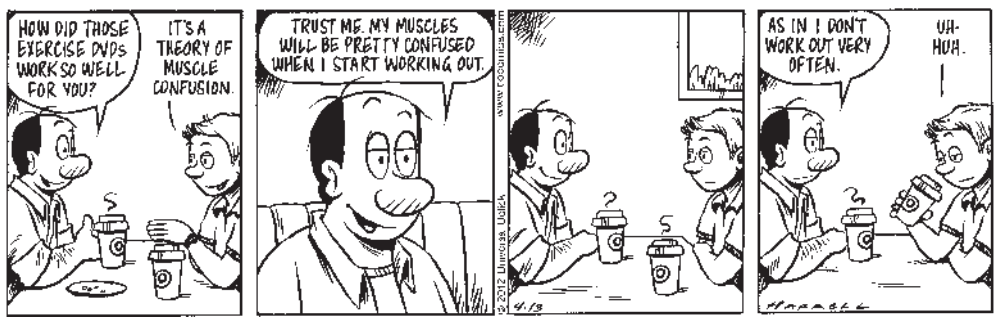
I'M GOING ON A BIKE RIDE.
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
NOTHING. HAVE A GOOD TIME.
LOOK, I DIDN'T DESIGN THIS OUTFIT! IT'S PRACTICAL!
HEY DAD, HOW'D YOU GET YOUR HEAD STUCK IN A BOWLING BALL? HA!
NEXT TIME, I'LL SQUIRT THEM BOTH WITH MY WATER BOTTLE.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


HOW DID THOSE EXERCISE DVDS WORK SO WELL FOR YOU?
IT'S A THEORY OF MUSCLE CONFUSION.
TRUST ME. MY MUSCLES WILL BE PRETTY CONFUSED WHEN I START WORKING OUT.
AS IN I DON'T WORK OUT VERY OFTEN.
UH-HUH.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

AH! SUMMERTIME! CONCERTS UNDER THE STARS! GOIN' FISHIN'.
ROOT BEER FLOATS ON THE PORCH. CATCHING FIREFLIES.
MAKING HOMEMADE ICE CREAM.
SWIMMING IN THE OL' POND.
BOY AM I GLAD WE DON'T DO ANY OF THAT.
HAND ME THE REMOTE.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

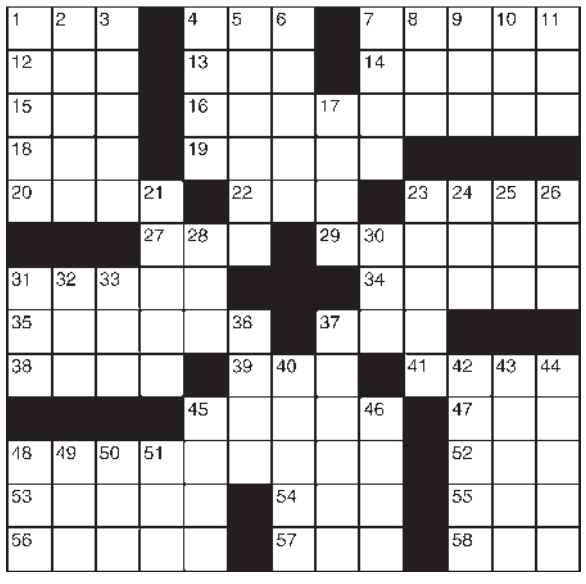
ACROSS
1 Crony
4 Light (Sp.)
7 Summary
12 Carte lead-in
13 "A Chorus Line" song
14 Entertain
15 Energy
16 Good product, idiomatically
18 Recede
19 Be frugal
20 Record
22 Id counterpart
23 Loathe
27 Possessed
29 "Clue" item
31 Cavalry unit
34 Guiding principle
35 Goes over the books
37 Weeding implement
38 Brewery output
39 Med. plan option
41 Creche trio
45 Eucalyptus eater
47 Heavy weight
48 Duke Ellington classic
52 Clear the tables
53 Give a speech
54 Deteriorate
55 Time of your life?
56 Thick
57 — Jima
58 Still

DOWN
1 Surfaced
2 Out of sorts?
3 "The Silence of the —"
4 Privation
5 One
6 Woody Allen movie
7 Engrossed
8 Ostrich's cousin
9 Scoundrel
10 Fool
11 Em, en, o, —, kue
17 Recognize
21 Psalm group
23 Seraglio
24 Mimic
25 Pirouette pivot
26 Conclude
28 Suitable
30 "The Name of the Rose" author
31 Bill
32 Regret
33 Praise in rhyme
36 Not barefoot
37 Empty
40 New Zealand native
42 Cornered
43 Overcharge
44 Smaller map
45 Dandling locale
46 21-Down member
48 Turf
49 Exist
50 Erstwhile M&Ms color
51 "— Impossible"

Solution time: 25 mins.

F	A	R	■	M	A	I	N	■	D	E	J	A
I	C	E	■	A	M	M	O	■	I	M	A	M
R	E	D	C	R	O	S	S	■	V	I	N	E
■	■	A	U	K	■	O	E	U	V	R	E	S
W	A	L	T	E	R	■	D	R	Y	■	■	■
A	L	E	■	T	I	M	■	N	U	R	S	E
G	A	R	B	■	P	A	L	■	P	F	A	R
S	I	T	U	P	■	R	O	B	■	D	I	N
■	■	■	G	O	D	■	P	A	D	D	L	E
C	A	H	A	V	A	N	■	F	E	W	■	■
A	B	A	B	■	R	E	D	F	L	A	G	S
R	E	N	O	■	K	O	O	L	■	R	A	P
S	E	G	O	■	O	N	C	E	■	F	L	Y

Yesterday's answer 4-13



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99c per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Rick Schroder, 42; Ron Perlman, 62; Al Green, 66; Paul Sorvino, 73.

Happy Birthday: Setbacks will force you to take a second look and make the necessary adjustments. Use your head and think matters through. You have what it takes to push your way to the top. Using muscle and persuasive dialogue will lead to success and greater stability. Don't just take part; run the show. Your numbers are 6, 8, 12, 23, 27, 33, 41.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't waste time on difficult people. You must focus on the positive and strive to use your ideas to help you build a better life. Putting up with demanding individuals will only get you down and lead nowhere. Change is needed. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Welcome any challenge that comes your way. It will be easy to impress everyone with the way you handle competition. Use your charm and communication skills to ferret out information that will allow you to win favors and approval. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Troubles at home will spill over into your professional life. You have to separate your dealings before you end up handling both work and home poorly. Focus on what you can change and enlist people who can help you. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Speak up about the way you feel, but don't make major changes before you have been given the OK. A move that affects other people must be handled cautiously, or you may end up looking bad and causing financial and emotional stress. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't leap when one step at a time will bring you better results. You will miss out on an opportunity if you are too aggressive or try to do everything on your own. Enlist the help of someone whose skills complement your own. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Take a pass if money is an issue. Avoid lending, borrowing or misplacing money and possessions. Don't trust anyone to do a job that requires your undivided attention and skill. Take care of your own business and excel. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Get away, do something that makes you feel good or spend time with someone you love. The peace of mind you gain from rest and relaxation will help you make a decision regarding how you will proceed with future prospects. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Let your imagination wander. The direction you pursue and the plans you make will excite someone who can help you achieve the success you desire. Lay down some ground rules before you get started. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Don't cover up someone else's mistake. You have to protect your personal and professional position. Someone is likely to misinterpret you in order to make you look bad. Fight for your rights and avoid untrustworthy people. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Size up your situation financially and domestically. You may have to downsize or make some changes at home in order to feel comfortable with your current position. Providing a space that can be used for extra income will pay off. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Put love first. If you feel strongly about something or someone, speak up and make decisions that will help stabilize your situation. Being diverse and adaptable will work in your favor. Taking control will command attention. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't look in the obvious places for help. You cannot rely on friends or relatives, but you can enlist the help of a group or an acquaintance working toward the same goal. Sharing common interests will bring the best results. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are encouraging and determined, ready for any challenge you encounter.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5	7		4	2				9
		4			3			1
							6	
3	2							5 8
9							1	
	1							
2 7			7	5	9	4	3	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 4/13

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	3	4	5	8	1	2	7	9
1	2	5	7	6	9	8	3	4
8	7	9	2	3	4	6	1	5
4	9	6	8	1	5	3	2	7
3	5	2	6	9	7	1	4	8
7	1	8	3	4	2	5	9	6
5	6	1	9	7	3	4	8	2
9	8	3	4	2	6	7	5	1
2	4	7	1	5	8	9	6	3

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE: BE AN ORGAN DONOR Solution: 8 letters

U	E	R	S	T	N	E	V	E	F	A	S	Ⓟ	J	F
R	M	E	K	I	D	N	E	Y	W	E	Ⓛ	L	U	A
G	I	B	F	E	D	E	G	E	N	Ⓔ	R	E	S	M
E	T	E	I	I	Y	L	E	I	Ⓗ	E	A	R	T	I
N	R	I	E	L	L	E	N	U	V	R	E	V	I	L
T	A	B	R	E	I	H	S	L	L	E	C	G	N	Y
R	N	O	R	E	H	C	C	H	E	A	L	T	H	R
A	S	N	W	O	R	R	A	M	R	L	V	I	O	E
N	F	E	Y	E	N	O	M	L	F	A	I	T	H	C
S	U	U	E	V	A	S	P	D	C	S	C	A	U	O
P	S	S	T	E	M	N	B	L	O	O	D	E	M	V
L	I	S	H	M	A	A	E	U	D	N	R	T	A	E
A	O	I	O	A	T	G	L	N	E	R	O	D	N	R
N	N	T	P	E	C	R	L	G	I	F	T	R	S	Y
T	E	L	E	T	H	O	N	S	P	O	N	S	O	R

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Bieber, Blood, Bone, Campbell, Cells, DeGeneres, Doctor, Donor, Ellen, Email, Events, Eyes, Faith, Family, Gift, Give, Health, Heart, Helene, Help, Hero, Hope, Humans, Justin, Kidney, Life, Liver, Lungs, Marrow, Match, Money, Organs, Race, Recovery, Safe, Save, Sponsor, Stem, Team, Telethons, Time, Tissue, Transfusion, Transplant, Umbilical Cord, Urgent, Value, Well

Yesterday's Answer: Comerman

THE COLLECTED WONDERWORDS: Volume 33 is the 33rd publication of Universal Uclick's puzzle collections. To order, call toll-free 1-800-591-2345 or visit the online bookstore at www.andrewsmcmeel.com. Andrews McMeel Universal, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, MO 64106. Customer service: (816) 581-7500.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$27
• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:

- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

Find today's solution in classified section

WHATZIT Solution: More than I bargained for

For Rent/Lease

Anaks Condo, 2BRs, washer/dryer, ceiling fans, a/c, storage, r/o water, swimming pool, tennis court, gated, 24/7 security. Ideal location, close to central Garapan. Call Ron Barrineau 322-4785 or 483-4785.

HOUSE FOR RENT

IN CHALAN KANOA
2 BEDROOM – FULLY FURNISHED
$400.00 A MONTH
FOR INQUIRIES: PLS CALL
AFTER 5:30 P.M. AT 235-3153

FOR RENT

4 bdrms, 2bath, newly renovated concrete hse & (2 units) of 1 bdrm at lower Asteo. Huge yard near ocean. Yard cleaning & trash collection included. Please call 2850622. Prices are negotiable.

Apartment for Rent

1 Bedroom-Semi Furnished $175.00
2 Bedroom-Semi Furnished $275.00
With pre-paid (power) meter, brand new air-con, brand new ice box. Free trash collection
Located in Chalan Kanoa. Call 288-4916 or 287-0717

Micronesia Resort, Inc. has an opening for an experienced

ACCOUNTANT

Qualification:
- Bachelor's Degree in Accounting
- Minimum 3-5 years accounting work experience
- Must have knowledge in Peachtree system, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel
- Responsible for maintaining A/R, A/P, G/L; Preparation of F/S, payroll & tax returns and other related duties

Salary: Pay and benefits commensurate with qualifications, experience and performance

Interested applicants may send Resume to: hr@mrisaipan.com. No phone calls please.

FOR SALE

Aluminum Container (will not rust) Converted to Guest House/Studio

Furnished with split type aircon, built-in shower, vanity with large mirror and separate toilet. Also has sliding patio door with vertical blinds. All in good condition.

Serious inquiries only. Contact Mila at 234-2440

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that Kenneth Mitsutsune is no longer affiliated or associated in any manner with Magical Bower, LLC dba Chalan Kanoa Beach Hotel effective September 01, 2011. Any transaction, contracts or agreements for any services accepted or made by him on behalf of the company after the date mentioned above are considered null and void.

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

PUBLIC NOTICE

PIC's Point Break flowrider will be closed for planned repair and maintenance from April 9~27, 2012. We apologize for the inconvenience during this time and thank you for your cooperation and patronage.

PIC Management

EMPLOYMENT

1-Fisherman (Bottom / Trolling / Diving) W/ 6 mos. experience required. Minimum Salary. Send resume to SMJ Corporation, P.O. Box 503944 Saipan MP 96950.

KING LAW OFFICE
Janet H. King
P.O. Box 520030 Tinian MP 96952
Ph: (670) 433 0419 235 8060
Fx: (670) 235 8070
Counsel for Plaintiff

LAW OFFICES OF LOREN A. SUTTON
D'Torres Building, Garapan, Saipan
P.O. BOX 5593
SAIPAN, MP 96950
PHONE: (670) 989 0627
FAX: (670) 235-8070
Co-Counsel for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

FRANCISCO Q. GUERRERO Plaintiff vs. **KIM, CHANG OK** Defendant	]]]]]]	**CASE NO. 12-0046** **AMENDED SUMMONS**

TO DEFENDANT: KIM, CHANG OK

YOU ARE HEREBY summoned and notified to file an answer, you make to the Amended Complaint. A copy of the Amended Complaint will be published in the Saipan Tribune Newspaper, and posted on the Superior Court Bulletin Board in Susupe, Saipan. You must file your Answer within twenty one days after publication of this Summons for four consecutive weeks, and deliver a copy of your answer to Loren A. Sutton, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is P.O. BOX 5593, SAIPAN MP 96950 as soon as practicable after filing your answer and sending it to this Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed by you or for you, by your counsel, and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above Court:

Dated this 22d day of March 2012.

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

www.saipantribune.com

LAW OFFICES OF S. JOSHUA BERGER
D'Torres Building, Garapan
P. O. Box 504340
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone (670) 235-8060 Fax 235-8070
e-mail "joshuaberger711@hotmail.com"

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS

ISLA FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC., Plaintiff, vs. **DARCY BILL S. MARATITA and MELDA M.C. MARATITA,** Defendants.	]]]]]]]]	**CIVIL CASE NO. 07-0324 A** **SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file with the Superior Court any Answer you wish to make to the Complaint in this matter, a copy of which may be obtained at the law office below or the Superior Court, within **twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication** of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your Answer to the Law Offices of S. Joshua Berger, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Second Floor , D' Torres Building, Garapan, P.O. Box 504340, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your Answer.

Your Answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Sususpe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By Order of the above Court:

DATED March 30, 2012

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

EMPLOYMENT

Looking for 1 Hollow Block . Machine Operator, 1 HE Operator. Pls call 888-1472

WANTED TO BUY

Need cash fast??? We want to buy your OnePass miles or Skymiles!!! Call 888-2205.

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

2 Bedroom Apartment for Rent. For $200.00 / month. Koblerville, please call 288-0728.

2 Bedroom apartment, Located in CK, along Texas Road. Fully furnished. $275.00 per month. Trash and Sewer included. Call 233-1190 or 287-8218

Ocean View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

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ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

CITY TRUST BANK, Plaintiff, -v- **ALEINA D. HOFSCHNEIDER, ALVIN U. HOFSCHNEIDER, and LOUISE C. HOFSCHNEIDER,** Defendants.	]]]]]]]]	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0505** **FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on August 3, 2011, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: (a) Lot 005 I 547, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2084/82, the original of which was registered on May 14, 1982, as Document No. 14232, at the Land Registry, Saipan; and (b) Lot 1734 NEW-7-5 (formerly part of Lot 1734 NEW-3, which was part of original Lot 1734, T.D. 661), as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 20179/90, the original of which was recorded on November 15, 1989, as Document No. 89-3805, at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, May 4, 2012, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 5th day of April, 2012:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

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Paul's layup lifts Clippers past Thunder, 100-98

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Blake Griffin's last visit to his hometown resulted in one of the most forgettable games of a young career that's already been filled with highlights.

Chris Paul sent him out as a winner this time.

Paul scored 31 points, including the game-winning shot on a layup with 8.8 seconds left, and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 100-98 on Wednesday night to stay in position for home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

"For me to come back and be able to play in front of family and friends is always fun," said Griffin, who was born and raised in Oklahoma City and played college ball at Oklahoma.

"But most importantly we're looking to get wins and this is a tough place to play and I'm proud of the way my teammates played and we dug out a win."

The Clippers needed the win to hang on to fourth place in the Western Conference standings. Fifth-place Memphis, which beat L.A. on Monday night, remains a half-game behind the Clippers after beating Phoenix 104-93 Wednesday night.

Griffin had lost his first three NBA games in his hometown, getting a career-low seven points in a 114-91 blowout loss last month. In that game, the Thunder's Kendrick Perkins set the tone by hitting Griffin in the face on a first-quarter foul that also earned him a technical.

On Wednesday night, Griffin had 16 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists and provided some highlight material, most notably a right-handed slam over Ibaka midway through the third quarter. He flirted with his second career triple-double before failing to register an assist in the fourth quarter.

But that's when Paul, playing on the court where he once starred with the relocated New Orleans Hornets , was at his best.

Paul's right-handed runner during a 15-4 run tied it at 80 before he came out for a brief rest, and Randy Foye's 3-pointer from the right side with 8:35 remaining put L.A. ahead 85-84. It was the first lead for the Clippers since it was 6-5 in the opening 4 minutes.

Paul also had a tiebreaking 3-pointer and a floater along the lane to give L.A. a five-point lead and then the 6-foot point guard restored that edge by tipping in his own miss a few trips later.

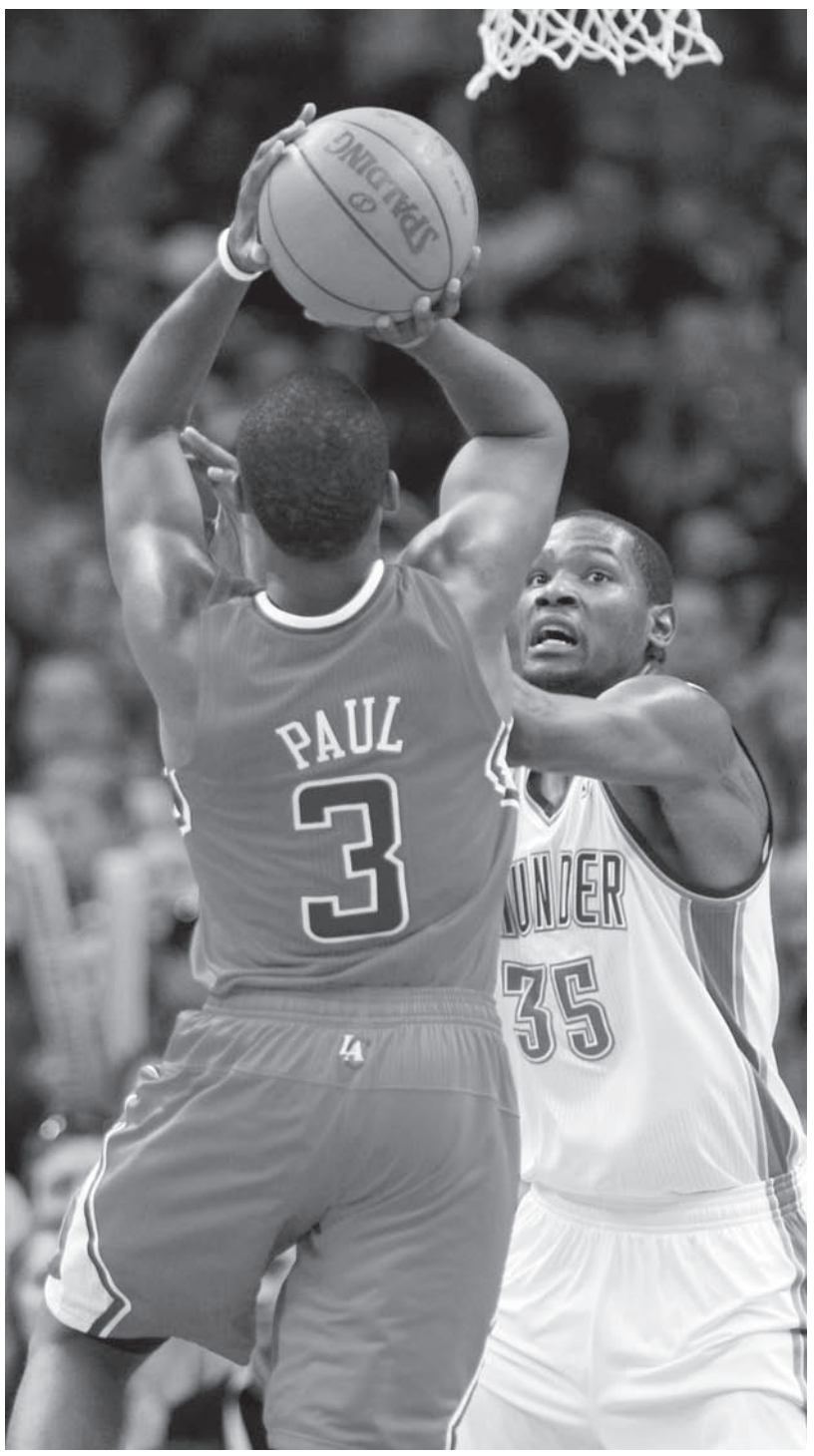
After Durant's 3-pointer tied it at 98 with 32 seconds left, Paul drained the shot clock before coming up with the decisive basket - the ball rattling around the rim before falling through.

He got past Thunder defensive specialist Thabo Sefolosha and squeezed the ball onto the rim past the league's leading shot blocker, Serge Ibaka, to put L.A. ahead.

"That's the reason he's the best down the stretch. He takes over games," Griffin said. "For that to be our guy, and he has the ball in his hands a lot, it just works out perfectly."

Paul had 24 points in the second half, including 11 in the final quarter.

"We just got lazy in the second half," said Thunder guard James Harden, who had 17 points off the bench. "We didn't come out with that aggression like we did in the first half to really control him, and he took advantage of it."



AP

Los Angeles Clippers guard Chris Paul (3) shoots over Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kevin Durant (35) in the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Wednesday, April 11, 2012.

Kevin Durant missed a 3-pointer that could have won it, hitting the back rim on a shot over Clippers center DeAndre Jordan from the left wing.

"He was playing off me a little and it got clogged up," Durant said. "I didn't want to risk a turnover, so I shot it."

Durant led Oklahoma City with 22 points and Russell Westbrook scored 20. The West-leading Thunder (42-16) have lost four of their last six games and are one game ahead of second-place San Antonio. The Spurs (40-16) have the same number of losses and would win the tiebreaker against Oklahoma City for the No. 1 seed.

The Thunder also fell two games behind idle Chicago (44-14) for the best record in the NBA.

"You're going to have to win games in the playoffs, no matter who you play. We're not worried about that," Harden said. "We just want to close these remaining games out and then go from there."

Durant was 7-for-21 and Westbrook 3-for-14 as both Oklahoma City All-Stars struggled from the field. The rest of the Thunder roster was 21-for-41, for 51 percent.

"You know, we missed some good shots. I can't complain," coach Scott Brooks said. "There's going to be nights you miss your shots. Kevin's not going to miss that many shots. Russell's not going to miss that many shots."

Los Angeles won for the ninth time in its last 11 games—all without top reserve Mo Williams, who is out with a sprained left big toe. That run followed a stretch when the Clippers lost 12 of 19.

"I'm proud of the way we've bounced back as a team through a lot of adversity and a lot of negative talk," Griffin said. "Everybody's just kind of batted it to the side and won ballgames."

Lakers 98, Spurs 84

In San Antonio, Andrew Bynum had 16 points and 30 rebounds—the most boards in an NBA game this season—as Los Angeles recorded a surprisingly comfortable win over San Antonio.

Metta World Peace (formerly Ron Artest) scored 26 points for the Lakers who made light of missing Kobe Bryant for a third straight game and handed the Western Conference's second-place team one of their most embarrassing losses this season.

Bynum's dominating night surpassed the previous NBA season-high of 25 rebounds, set twice by Orlando's Dwight Howard and Milwaukee's Ersan Ilyasova.

Danny Green led the Spurs with 22 points.

Grizzlies 104, Suns 93

In Memphis, Rudy Gay scored a season-high 32 points as Memphis won its fourth straight with a victory over Phoenix.

Memphis outscored the Suns 17-6 after the game was tied with 6:27 left. Dante Cunningham had six of his 10 points during that run.

Marcin Gortat had 19 points for Phoenix on 9 of 12 from the floor.

Jazz 103, Rockets 91

In Houston, Gordan Hayward scored a season-high 29 points as Utah boosted its fading playoff hopes with a win over Houston.

Paul Millsap added 21 points for the Jazz, who held the No. 10 spot in the Western Conference standings coming into the game.

The Jazz shot 51 percent (40 of 78) and led by as many as 18, taking advantage of Houston's 36 percent shooting from the field.

Goran Dragic scored 19 for the Rockets, who had a four-game winning streak ended.

Knicks 111, Bucks 107

In Milwaukee, J.R. Smith hit a 3-pointer for the lead with 1:04 left, and New York held on to beat Milwaukee in a game that could turn out to be critical to both teams' playoff hopes.

Carmelo Anthony had 32 points and 10 rebounds for the Knicks, who took a two-game lead over the Bucks for the No. 8 seed in the Eastern Conference. Smith had 14 points off the bench.

Monta Ellis had 35 points for Milwaukee.

Pacers 104, Cavaliers 98, OT

In Cleveland, Danny Granger scored 23 points, five in overtime, to help Indiana edge Cleveland.

George Hill made a dagger 3-pointer in the extra session for the Pacers, who are clinging to the No. 3 spot in the Eastern Conference.

David West added 19 points for Indiana, 6-1 in its past seven.

Antawn Jamison scored 21 for the Cavs, a league-worst 0-5 in overtime games.

76ers 93, Raptors 75

In Toronto, Philadelphia downed Toronto to add a key win in its chase of a playoff berth.

Thaddeus Young scored 17 points and Nikola Vucevic had 12 for the 76ers, who avenged a 21-point home loss to Toronto last Wednesday.

This time, the 76ers blew the game open in the fourth, outscoring Toronto 30-18 and coasting to victory thanks to an 11-0 run. The Raptors went scoreless for 4:16 late in the game.

Hornets 105, Kings 96

In New Orleans, Jason Smith scored 22 points, hitting 10 of 12 shots, to lead New Orleans past Sacramento.

Marco Belinelli added 21 points for the Hornets, who shot 55.9 percent (38 of 68) and surged ahead for good with an 18-3 run in the third quarter.

Marcus Thornton had 25 points for the Kings, who have lost six straight.

NBA BRIEFS

No timetable for Bryant's return to Lakers from left shin soreness

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Kobe Bryant is out for a third consecutive game because of a sore left shin, and Lakers coach Mike Brown says there is still no timetable for his return. Brown said before Wednesday night's game at San Antonio that the NBA's scoring leader isn't nagging him to play. Brown said Bryant wants to be cautious and not exacerbate the injury. Bryant, who is averaging 28.1 points, had started 138 consecutive games before missing Saturday's loss at Phoenix. The Lakers then barely squeaked past lowly New Orleans on Monday without their superstar. Devin Ebanks was slated to start again in place of Bryant against the Spurs. The Lakers' next game is Friday against Denver.

Love suffers mild concussion after blow to head

DENVER (AP)—An unintentional elbow ended the night early for Kevin Love and sent him to the hospital. The Minnesota Timberwolves All-Star forward sustained a mild concussion and neck strain after a hit to the head against the Denver Nuggets on Wednesday. He was kept overnight at an area hospital for precautionary reasons. Love was helped off the floor by medical personnel following an inadvertent blow from JaVale McGee when the Nuggets center went up for a jumper in the lane. Love had missed all five of his shots in the first quarter before being knocked out of the game. "It was pretty bad, but hopefully he'll be all right," said guard J.J. Barea, who had a career-high 15 assists in a 113-107 loss to the Nuggets. "As soon as he got hit, I knew he was out. He was talking, but he wasn't all there, though." Love is the NBA's top scorer since the All-Star break, averaging nearly 29 points. Not only that, but he's among the league leaders in rebounding, free throws made and minutes. Even more, Love's the leader of the team on the court and his injury shook the Timberwolves, who fell behind by as many as 24 points before storming back and nearly pulling off a remarkable comeback.

Wade argues that Olympic athletes deserve to be paid

Miami Heat captain Dwyane Wade is looking forward to the summer Olympic Games in London later this year—but there is one thing that would make him cherish the experience a little more. Wade said today that he thinks Olympic athletes should be paid for the time they devote to Team USA. "It's a lot of things you do for the Olympics—a lot of jerseys you sell," Wade told ESPN's Michael Wallace. "We play the whole summer. I do think guys should be compensated. Just like I think college players should be compensated as well. Unfortunately, it's not there. But I think it should be something, you know, there for it." Wade was the leading scorer for Team USA in 2008, when the Americans took home gold from Beijing. He commented then that the summer was taxing, with very little rest in between the end of the NBA season and the beginning of the Games—that problem will be even worse this season, with the lockout pushing the NBA Finals into late June. Team USA workouts begin in July. ***(www.si.com)***

Petrino, mistress exchanged 100s of calls, texts

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (AP)—Former Arkansas coach Bobby Petrino and his mistress exchanged more than 4,300 text messages and nearly 300 phone calls over the past seven months—on game days, before dawn and even as the police report that hastened his downfall was being released to the public, according to a review of his business cellphone records by The Associated Press.

The messages, among some 300 pages of records released under a Freedom of Information Act request, appear to include picture and video files, though there was no way to verify the content. But the records clearly show a married father of four in frequent contact with Jessica Dorrell, a 25-year-old former Razorbacks volleyball player.

Petrino was fired Tuesday night for failing to disclose his relationship with Dorrell, whom he hired last month without disclosing his conflict of interest or the fact he had once paid her $20,000. Athletic director Jeff Long said he had determined their relationship had been ongoing for a "significant" amount of time, but he did not say for how long.

The phone records show that Petrino remained in close contact with Dorrell following the April 1 motorcycle accident in which Petrino suffered four broken ribs, a cracked neck vertebra and scrapes and bruises

That day, Petrino and Dorrell went for a motorcycle ride on a two-lane highway southeast of Fayetteville and skidded off the road. Petrino and Dorrell talked for 16 minutes earlier that day before the crash at 6:45 p.m., and they also had a 22-minute conversation the following day—while Petrino was apparently still in the hospital recovering.

Petrino's accident report was disclosed by state police on April 5, and the two talked 11 times that day. That included a pair of 2-minute calls around 3:30 p.m., when police were releasing the report that for the first time exposed her presence at the accident.

AP

In this April 3, 2012, file photo, Arkansas football coach Bobby Petrino speaks during a news conference in Fayetteville, Ark., after being released from a hospital after he was injured in a motorcycle accident.

Later that evening, as questions swirled about his future at Arkansas, Petrino exchanged four calls with his agent, Russ Campbell, totaling 10 minutes.

The cellphone records show Petrino and Dorrell were in contact at least as far back as Sept. 12. The university provided nearly seven months of Petrino's business cellphone records, and that is the first date listed. Among the findings:

Petrino exchanged 91 texts with Dorrell on Sept. 13 and 84 texts with her over five hours on Oct. 28, the day before a game at Vanderbilt. On Oct. 17, the two swapped 73 text messages, and on four days in a row in the week before a loss to eventual national champion Alabama, Petrino called Dorrell early—at 5:52 a.m., 6:35 a.m., 5:49 a.m. and 7:55 a.m.

The day Arkansas beat Troy, the two exchanged 70 texts. They exchanged 26 texts the day Arkansas beat Mississippi State and four following the Razorbacks' loss to LSU on Nov. 25. Dorrell sent Petrino a text during Arkansas' Cotton Bowl win over Kansas State, though the coach didn't reply until the following day.

The 51-year-old Petrino was earning an average annual salary of $3.5 million and he had built Arkansas into a national power, including a 21-5 record over the past two seasons and a No. 5 ranking in last season's final AP poll. He was expected to lead the Hogs on a national title run next season, but his career was effectively ended the day of the accident.

Petrino didn't disclose Dorrell's presence on the ride to Long until 20 minutes before the police report was released to the public. The records show Petrino's six-minute call to Long at 3:11 p.m., during which the coach first told Long of his inappropriate relationship with Dorrell and her presence at the accident. He was on the phone with her a few minutes later.

Petrino has issued a lengthy apology and said he was focused on trying to make amends to his family.

Long, meanwhile, is now a full day into his search for a new coach. Late Wednesday, he tweeted: "At this time I have not spoken to anyone about the Head Coaching position."

Former Arkansas quarterback Ryan Mallett, now with the New England Patriots, tweeted his support for Garrick McGee. The former Razorbacks offensive coordinator was hired as the head coach at UAB in December after four years in Fayetteville.

"GM only coach Ark should look at if they wanna win now," Mallett wrote. "I'm talkin about Garrick McGee. He can win at Arkansas."

Mallett made clear he was not referring to Gus Malzahn, the former offensive coordinator at Arkansas, Tulsa and Auburn who took the head coaching job at Arkansas State in December.

"That would be a mistake," Mallett tweeted.

NCAA puts Baylor basketball on 3 years' probation

WACO, Texas (AP)—The NCAA put Baylor on three years of probation Wednesday after an investigation turned up hundreds of impermissible telephone calls and text messages sent to prep recruits by coaches and assistants on the basketball teams.

The violations were considered to be major infractions, and they were announced less than a week after the Lady Bears won the national championship with the first 40-0 season in NCAA history.

Still, it could have been much worse for Baylor. All of the penalties were proposed by the school and accepted by the NCAA after a review of nearly 900,000 phone and text message records found that 738 texts and 528 calls were against the rules.

The NCAA said men's coach Scott Drew failed to monitor his program and will be suspended for two Big 12 games next season, in addition to recruiting restrictions. Women's coach Kim Mulkey also received recruiting restrictions.

"I believe strongly in following NCAA rules and will always try to do so in the future," Mulkey said in a statement released by the school. "I do nothing without permission from our compliance office and will continue to ask questions to assure that things are done right. Any compliance-related mistakes, even those that are secondary, are disappointing. The majority of mistakes in this matter were errors in sending text messages and failure to accurately document our phone calls."

The report put a bit of a damper on what has been an extraordinary run of success for Baylor athletics.

Besides Baylor's win over Notre Dame for the women's title, Drew's team won a school-record 30 games and reached the NCAA regional finals, where the Bears lost to eventual national champion Kentucky. And all that came after star quarterback Robert Griffin III became the school's first Heisman Trophy winner following a football season that included 10 wins for the first time since 1980.

Mulkey was named the AP's national coach of the year and junior Brittney Griner was its player of the year. How Baylor recruited Griner, one of the most dominant women's players in college basketball history, was reportedly part of the NCAA probe.

A school report obtained by ESPN.com said Mulkey and her staff committed minor NCAA violations for having impermissible contact with Griner and her family. During a 2007 camp, coaches spoke with the Griners about the basketball program, academic requirements and the school in general both before and after the camp.

Mulkey also reportedly broke NCA rules when she sat next to Griner's father and discussed what the Baylor experience would be like. Brittney Griner, who is from the Houston area, played on the same AAU team as Mulkey's daughter, Makenzie Robertson.

The NCAA report did not mention Griner or her family by name, though Mulkey addressed it in her statement.

"The other matters were related to my daughter's participation in summer basketball," she said. "While I am and will always be a mother first, I do recognize that there has to be a balance between my role as a mother of a prospect and my role as a head coach. I have always tried to strike that balance and appreciate the opportunity to demonstrate to the NCAA staff such balancing efforts dating back to when Makenzie was in the seventh grade. I am pleased that my efforts to find the appropriate balance between a mother and a coach were recognized."

Griner said she had "made it clear to the NCAA staff and everyone else" that she had chosen Baylor early in the recruiting process.

Besides keeping Mulkey off the recruiting trail in July, Baylor said one of her assistants has been barred from making recruiting calls from January through April. The school also reduced its women's basketball scholarships from 15 to 13 in 2011-12.

On the men's side, Drew will miss the first two Big 12 games of the season, recruiting visits were trimmed and he lost a scholarship this past season and in 2012-13. In addition, a former coach faces a one-year "show cause" order that effectively prevents him from coaching at an NCAA school.

The assistant wasn't identified, but FOXSports.com reported in October 2010 that the NCAA was investigating the recruitment of Hanner Perea. The report said assistant Mark Morefield sent dozens of texts to Perea's AAU and high school coaches and urged two of them to provide false and misleading information to the NCAA about a series of text messages. Morefield resigned in July 2011.

"I sincerely apologize to Baylor University and Baylor Nation," Morefield said in statement released by his lawyer. "I learned a very valuable lesson in this case. In my 13 years of coaching at NCAA institutions, I have not intentionally violated NCAA rules. I will grow from this experience with a better understanding of NCAA rules."

The NCAA violations come nine years after Baylor basketball player Patrick Dennehy was found shot to death after he had been missing for six weeks. Teammate Carlton Dotson pleaded guilty to murder. The ensuing investigation uncovered NCAA violations, illegal tuition payments and unreported failed drug tests that led to the resignation of coach Dave Bliss, who was secretly recorded by an assistant coach of trying to persuade others to cover up misdeeds by portraying Dennehy as a drug dealer.

Athletic director Ian McCaw said the school has made "significant investments in compliance staffing and infrastructure" since the investigation began.

Drew said he took full responsibility for the violations, saying many were simply the result of improperly logging or failing to log calls to recruits. He noted that the school has a new software tracking system to assist coaches with the logistics.

"I came to Baylor in 2003 to do a job: rebuild a program decimated by very serious NCAA rules violations and tragedy," he said. "I promised to rebuild the program in a way Baylor could be proud-morally, academically and, finally, athletically, and we continue on that journey today."

Rays rally to inflict Tigers first loss

DETROIT (AP)—Tampa Bay's Ben Zobrist hit a tiebreaking two-run single as part of the Rays four-run ninth inning that lifted them to a 4-2 win over Detroit on Wednesday, inflicting the Tigers first loss of the season.

Detroit starter Justin Verlander (0-1) took a one-hitter into the ninth and hadn't allowed a run all season, but he gave up one on a wild pitch. Evan Longoria then tied the game 2-2 with a single to left on Verlander's 104th and final pitch.

Daniel Schlereth came on and allowed a walk to load the bases, and Zobrist singled up the middle off Jose Valverde.

Tampa Bay starter James Shields (1-0) allowed two runs in eight innings. Fernando Rodney pitched the ninth for his third save.

Mariners 4, Rangers 3

In Arlington, Texas, John Jaso had an RBI single with two outs in the ninth to cap a three-run rally that gave Seattle victory over Texas.

Jaso, the No. 9 hitter playing his first game this season, had a leadoff triple in the eighth and then scored Seattle's first run on a single by Dustin Ackley.

Justin Smoak led off the ninth with a single against Joe Nathan (0-2) before Kyle Seager's double. Jesus Montero then had a sacrifice fly and Michael Saunders an RBI double before Jaso's liner up the middle.

Rookie left-hander Lucas Luetge (1-0) had two strikeouts in 1 1-3 innings for his first major league victory. Brandon League worked the ninth for third save in as many chances.

Athletics 5, Royals 4, 12 innings

In Oakland, Jonathan Broxton hit the batter with the bases loaded in the 12th inning, forcing Jemile Weeks home for the winning run.

Moments earlier, Broxton (0-1) had also hit Yoenis Cespedes to load the bases and the closer received a mound visit from the pitching coach but stayed in.

It marked the third time in A's history they had won a game on a hit-by-pitch.

Yankees 6, Orioles 4, 10 innings

In Baltimore, Nick Swisher hit a two-run homer in the 10th to give New York back-to-back extra-innings wins over Baltimore.

Curtis Granderson homered and drove in three runs for the Yankees, who won consecutive extra-inning road games for the first time in 11 years.

With two outs in the 10th, Mark Teixeira hit an opposite-field pop off Kevin Gregg (0-1) that landed just between two onrushing fielders.

Blue Jays 3, Red Sox 1

In Toronto, Ricky Romero outdueled opposing pitcher Jon Lester to steer Toronto past Boston.

Lester (0-1) issued a two-out walk to Rajai Davis in the eighth, snapping a streak of 15 consecutive outs. Davis promptly stole second, beating the tag on a failed pickoff, then scored on Yunel Escobar's single to center.

Romero's (1-0) streak of 17 straight outs ended with back-to-back walks to begin the ninth. He left to a standing ovation after a fly out to center, with both runners advancing on the play.

Twins 6, Angels 5

In Minneapolis, Jamey Carroll had his first two hits with Minnesota, including the go-ahead single in the seventh as Minnesota edged Los Angeles.

Chris Parmelee hit a tying two-run triple in the seventh before Carroll drove him in with a single.

Josh Willingham hit a two-run homer for the Twins.

White Sox 10, Indians 6

In Cleveland, A.J. Pierzynski hit a three-run homer and drove in four runs to power Chicago past Cleveland.

Chicago scored four runs in the first off Justin Masterson (0-1), but Cleveland closed to 5-4 in the fifth against John Danks (1-1) on Travis Hafner's two-run double.

Then in sixth, Alejandro De Aza hit a two-run homer and Pierzynski homered for a 10-4 lead.

Nationals 4, Mets 0

In New York, Washington's Stephen Strasburg outpitched New York's Johan Santana in a marquee matchup of aces on the mend, as the Nationals won to spoil the 50th anniversary of the Mets' first game.

Meeting in a blustery, chilly matinee, Strasburg (1-0) and Santana each got off to an erratic start but settled into a duel between pitchers coming back from major arm operations.

Strasburg struck out nine in six innings.

Reds 4, Cardinals 3

In Cincinnati, Joey Votto tied a career best with four hits and scored the go-ahead run in the ninth inning to complete Cincinnati's comeback win over St. Louis.

Down 3-0 in the third, the Reds tied the score in the fifth.

Votto doubled off Marc Rzepczynski (0-1) leading off the ninth. After an intentional walk and a strike out, Fernando Salas came on to pitch and pinch-hitter Chris Heisey lined a single to left for the crucial run.

Dodgers 4, Pirates 1

In Los Angeles, Andre Ethier hit an RBI single for his second go-ahead hit in two days, leading Los Angeles over Pittsburgh.

Dodgers starter Chad Billingsley (2-0) allowed a homer by Clint Barmes but walked none.

Pirates starter Erik Bedard (0-2) gave up eight hits in five-plus innings and is still looking for his first NL victory.

Padres 2, Diamondbacks 1

In San Diego, Chris Denorfia hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning that lifted San Diego over Arizona, ending the Diamondbacks status as the last unbeaten team in the major leagues.

Denorfia's clutch shot to straightaway center field—his first of the season—came off David Hernandez (0-1). Cameron Maybin was on base after a walk.

Padres reliever Ernesto Frieri (1-0) threw 1 1-3 innings to take the win, and Huston Street pitched a perfect ninth for his first save with his new team.

Brewers 2, Cubs 1

In Chicago, George Kottaras hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning to give Milwaukee a third straight win over divisional rival Chicago.

Mat Gamel doubled leading off the seventh and Kottaras—the Brewers back-up catcher—followed with the homer.

Milwaukee starter Yovani Gallardo (1-1) allowed one run in seven innings. Francisco Rodriguez worked around a pair of walks in the eighth, and John Axford pitched a one-hit ninth for the save.

Braves 6, Astros 3

In Houston, Jason Heyward homered and drove in two runs for Atlanta in the win over Houston.

Backup catcher David Ross hit a two-run double in the fourth, giving the Braves a 3-1 lead. Heyward, who finished with three hits, added an insurance run with his solo shot in the eighth.

The Astros made four errors, as they did on opening day.

Phillies 7, Marlins 1

In Philadelphia, Roy Halladay threw seven sharp innings to steer Philadelphia past Miami.

Halladay (2-0) allowed one run, yet the win owed as much to the team breaking out of its offensive slump.

Missing Chase Utley and Ryan Howard, the Phillies scored only eight runs in their first four games, but they rocked Marlins ace Josh Johnson (0-2), ending his night early after conceding a career-worst 11 hits in 3-2/3 innings.

The Marlins were without manager Ozzie Guillen, who was suspending by the team for saying he admired Cuban dictator Fidel Castro — a sensitive subject in Florida which is the home to many Cuban emigres. Bench coach Joey Cora filled in as manager.

Rockies 17, Giants 8

In Denver, Carlos Gonzalez tripled twice, drove in four runs and scored three times as Colorado racked up the runs in beating San Francisco.

The Rockies collected 22 hits—half of them for extra bases—in a game that recalled the old big-hitting days at Coors Field.

Colorado's Matt Reynolds (1-0) got the win with 1 2-3 innings in relief of Jeremy Guthrie, who failed to hold a 6-0 lead.

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Middle Road, Next to Subway

2012 Mahi Fishing Derby set for tomorrow

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Saipan Fishermen's Association is hosting the 8th Annual 2012 Mahi Fishing Derby tomorrow at the Smiling Cove Marina.

Pre-registration is scheduled for today, April 13, at Smiling Cove until 6pm.

Prizes are still being determined as organizers are hoping for over 30 participants.

The Top 5 finishers will all be awarded trophies and prizes. Only mahi fish will be counted toward the competition, regardless of the weight qualification and a boat can only win one prize per category.

Registration on the day of the derby starts at 5:30am at Smiling Cove Marina. At the start of the derby, all boats must check in between 6am and 8am before heading out to sea, however late entrants will be accepted. All competitors must enter their catches to derby officials by the 6pm deadline at the Smiling Cove weigh-in station in order to qualify.

The SFA would also like to remind all participants to make sure they sign the mandatory release waiver form, no exceptions.

This 30.35-lb mahi was caught by the crew of Carmelita, which won the 7th Annual Mahi Fishing Derby last year.
WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Last year, the *Carmelita*, under captain and former Justice Alex Castro and crewmates Alex Castro Jr., Jerry Babauta and Rufino S. Inos, pulled in a record 30.35-lb mahi for top prize over a field of 31 boats.

This year's derby is also made possible by longtime supporter the Marianas Visitor Authority and new sponsor Mar-Pac Budweiser.

For more information, contact Frank Tudela at 664-3200 or 664-3201 or email ftudela@marianas.com.

QQ

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With 5.2 seconds left, Crystal Pure was pressured to make either a game-winning trey or a two-pointer and had time to map out a play as QQ's Lerio Pagarao called an ill-advised timeout.

Mike Cruz then got the ball to Kae Bernardo, who drove strong to the baseline and made the equalizer, 2.1 seconds left in regulation. QQ's Wowie Abuel threw the ball from the backcourt for a long trey and missed, sending the game into OT.

In overtime, QQ outsteadied Crystal Pure, as the former made important free throws and some defensive stops, while the latter muffed four crucial charities and committed an error in the closing minutes.

Cruz had two of those misses, allowing QQ to keep a three-point cushion, 76-73. After Cruz's second miss, Paraiso fought for the rebound and won, paving the way for an Abuel's breakaway layup. Abuel also missed the shot, but drew an unsportsmanlike foul on Lerio, and split his charities for QQ's 77-73 lead, plus possession, 39.7 seconds left on the clock.

Crystal Pure gave up another foul to stop the clock and it worked as Dan Mateo went 0-for-2, while J.R Cadag made a quick two to cut QQ's lead to a deuce, 75-77. Mangali lost the leather in the ensuing play and Crystal Pure had another chance to tie the game when Rex Yabut was fouled, however, he too faltered both charities.

Mateo made another trip to the stripe when QQ regained possession, and again muffed two free throws. After the second miss, Arthur Montes, who came in for the fouled out George Cruz in the last one minute of the overtime, collared the rebound and went up for a shot and missed. He, however got another rebound and this time kicked the ball out to Mangali, who was fouled with 5.7 remaining on the clock. Mangali went 1-for-2 and Crystal Pure had to rush a play from the backcourt and committed a costly error when Quincy Johnson's cross-court pass to Mike Cruz was intercepted by Montes.

QQ and Crystal Pure had a neck-and-neck battle for the fourth and last semis seat, as neither team led by double digits. Crystal Pure's biggest advantage was four, 39-35, while QQ led by as much as eight at the end of the third, 51-43. Crystal Pure played catch up in the fourth and could not overhaul the lead, as it failed to feed Bernardo often in the paint.

In the first game, Blue Haus led from start to finish, stretching its advantage to as much as 15 and foiling Shirley's repeated comeback bids.

Shirley's managed to move to within eight, 57-65, with still 1:38 left on the clock, and had a chance to slice the deficit to six, but Jerome Norita's inbound pass to Yosh Gabaldon was too strong and went out to the sideline. That had been the story for Shirley's all night, especially in the fourth quarter, as it turned the ball over one play after another. No official statistics on turnovers were kept, but Shirley's had more than 10 in the final canto alone.

In contrast, Blue Haus moved the ball well, resulting to four players scoring in double figures with Elmer Esdrelon making 17, Junar Guiab adding 14, and Bernardo Aquino and Brandon Talania chipping in 12 and 10, respectively.

With the win, the defending champion faces Andhok's in the second semis game tonight at 8pm, while the Sunrisers duels QQ in the first match at 6:30pm.

First Game

Blue Haus 72 – Esdrelon 17, Guiab 14, Aquino 12, Talania 10, Camacho 5, Tumaquip 4, Sharry 2, Itaas 2.

Shirley's 60 – Rabauliman 17, Berline 13, Barrios 11, Norita 10, Petersberg 6.

Scoring by quarters: 13-10, 32-25, 53-43, 72-60.

Second Game

QQ Rent A Car 78 – Mangali 24, Paraiso 19, Abuel 15, Pagarao 11, Sison 4, Cruz 4, Mateo 2.

Crystal Pure 75 – Bernardo 17, Johnson 14, Cruz 12, Yabut 12, Miranda 9, Lerio 8, Cadag 2.

Scoring by quarters: 19-18, 33-30, 53-49, 68-68, 78-75.

OL'ACES

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SENIOR DIVISION
Ol'Aces 12, Jets II 7

It was a one-run game in favor of Ol'Aces, 5-4, after four innings when Ol'Aces jumped on top 10-4, in the bottom of the fifth inning off just two hits.

Jun Rabauliman led off with a triple and the wheels came off the Jets II's defense, which allowed three runs to score off errors and passed balls before Frankie Camacho smashed a two-RBI double.

Jets II tried to mount a comeback in the top of the sixth, but only mustered three runs in response. Ol'Aces got two of them back in the bottom frame and held strong out on the field for the win.

Fielders 20, Enforcers 5

After breaking the ice with four runs in the opening frame, the Fielders batted through their lineup twice in the second inning as they lit up the scoreboard with 14 runs off 12 hits.

Two leadoff walks set up an RBI single by Keene Guerrero and then a three-run homer by Jared Lizama. Moments later Davin Ada and Khobby Kaipat both bashed RBI triples and Gayvan Uchau bagged an RBI single in his second at bat.

Guerrero and Lizama kept rolling with an RBI single and a two-run home run, while Ada hit an RBI base knock on his second turn.

The Enforcers were never able to recover and the Fielders added two more runs in the fourth and another in the fifth before clocking out early.

Fielders' Lizama batted 3-for-4 with five RBIs, two runs, and a base on balls.

Jets II 15, Lions 4

The Lions worked around all four of their runs in the first inning and it remained a close game, 5-4, in favor of Jets II after four frames.

However, for some reason the Lions defense crumbled in the fifth and allowed Jets II to get off the hook for six runs off just two hits.

The Lions were then stood up at third base for their third time in the bottom frame and Jets II worked around enough runs needed to put the run rule into effect in the top of the sixth frame. Visually jaded, the Lions went 1-2-3 to end the what was a really good game.

Jeffrey Lizama batted 4-for-5 with two RBIs and three runs.

BIG DIVISION
Fielders 4, Ol'Aces 3

Ol'Aces worked out a 2-1 lead off two hits and an error in the opening frame. Harry Nakamura doubled home leadoff man Diego Camacho and was knocked in by Keoni Lizama.

Fielder's Marvin Ngeskebei lifted a sacrifice fly in the bottom of the second to lock it up at 2-all, and the count shifted to 3-all after the dust cleared in the third inning.

Ol'Aces' Lizama bagged an RBI single in the top frame, and the Fielders obliged with another sacrifice fly, this time by R.J. Villagomez.

Ol'Aces left runners on the corners in the top of the fourth, but the Fielders also held up at third base in the bottom half.

Fielders pitcher Nathan Guerrero stepped up big in the late innings and clocked two 1-2-3 showings to close the fifth and sixth frames.

Jonah Villagomez led off the bottom of the sixth and got plunked, but managed to work his way around the diamond and scored the go ahead run off a passed ball.

Ol'Aces' Felipe Litulumar belted a leadoff triple to start the final inning of regulation, but Guerrero bit down on the mound and left the tying run at the doorstep.

Guerrero gave up one earned run off seven hits with eight strikeouts through seven innings.

Fielders' R.J. Villagomez bagged two RBIs and Carl Camacho batted 3-for-3 with a run.

Hustlers 17, Lions 6

Lions' Leroy Regis and Danny Cruz broke the ice with an RBI single and a two-RBI triple in the first inning, but the Hustlers brushed it off and went ahead, 5-3, in the top of the second.

McGary Scaliem stole home, Kevin Villagomez singled in Kenta Castro and also took the dish, and Brian Camacho cranked an RBI triple and was brought to the plate by Manny Flores.

The Lions early roar turned into a whimper late in the game and only managed to answer the Hustlers' consistent production with toothpicks in the fourth, fifth and sixth innings.

As for the Hustlers, they added a run in the third from Castro, two more in the fourth off a triple by Jeremy Lizama, and another pair from a MacGarette Duenas double in the fifth frame; he scored off an error and brought the count to 10-6, with an inning to go.

The Hustlers went on to slap seven more runs on top of their lead off five hits and silenced the Lions in the final stand.

Hustlers Camacho batted 4-for-5 with an RBI and two runs.

SOUTHERN

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Babauta, finished third at 7.30 seconds, followed by MHS' Jim Lacsina (7.33 seconds), Southern's Paul Mariano (7.54), and MHS' Tanner Kenty (7.56), John Santy (7.60), Joon Lee (7.82), Hughen Cholymay (7.85), Michael Moran, Jr. (7.86), and Michael Mancao (7.86). Three other Southern runners, seven MHS bets, and one from SIS joined the qualifying sprints.

Salem again pulled off an upset over Ngirchongor in the 100m qualifying races, as the former clocked in at 11.56 seconds, .23 of a second ahead of the latter (11.79 seconds). Mariano had the third fastest qualifying time at 11.92 seconds, followed by Lacsina (12 seconds), Tanner (12.16), Mancao (12.18), MHS' Poland Masaharu (12.48), Southern's Kimo Olopai, and Saipan International Schol's Christopher Lam (12.69). Sixteen other runners joined the 100m qualifier.

In the long jump, Mariano logged the best record at 5.41 meters beating four other MHS bets, Mancao (5.34m), Lacsina (5.03m), Kenty (5), and Moran (4.98m).

The Dolphins managed to foil Southern's sweep of the Week 1 qualifiers when the quartet of Mancao, Ngirchongor, Kenty, and Lacsina ruled the 4x100m relay with a time of 48.25 seconds. Southern's Babauta, Salem, Mariano, and Olopai checked in at 48.61 seconds, while MHS' second team (Santy, Cholymay, Masaharu, and Damart Teregeyo) came in at third (51.49 seconds).

All the qualifying records in the high school division will be compiled and only the Top 8 will earn slots to the All Schools meet that will run from May 17 to 19.

Meanwhile, in the girls division, in was an all-MHS affair with Rachel Abrams winning all three individual qualifying events. She clocked in at 7.88 seconds in the 60m sprint, 12.82 in the 100m run, and 4.41m in the long jump, beating her MHS teammates.

LEE

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in the first second. The winner of the Jones-Buenaventura tiff will face Montgomery in the semifinals tomorrow, while victors of the Cruz-Vivian Lee and Quan-Dong Min Lee games will duel in the other semis match.

In the men's 4.0 singles, five players will fight for the championship. Colin Ramsey challenges father, Gary, in the first round tonight, with the winner colliding against Chang Whan Jang tomorrow. Also scheduled to meet this Saturday are junior players Carl Dela Cruz and Chris Cajigan.

The men's 3.0 singles will be a battle among PIC employees with Darrel Roligat facing Glenn Policare and Dennis Tababa squaring off against Keoni Ichihara.

In the women's open, Mikayla Lopez will be up against the favored Thea Minor this Saturday, while Malika Miyawaki and Kinumi Taniguchi will duel for the women's 3.0 title also on Saturday.

Besides the adults singles, the second and final week of the PIC tournament will also feature junior doubles and mixed doubles games.

Four pairs are playing in the mixed open with Cruz and Thea Minor on the upper half of the bracket, joining Roy Pangelinan and Jodel Fernandez. Quan and teammate Lopez are in the lower half with Christian Miller and Vivian Lee.

The mixed 3.0 singles also has four teams in Isabel Heras and Luther Lizama, husband and wife Aaron and Nina Engelhardt, Dylan Ackerman and Carol Lee, and mother and son Flor and Michael Jones.

In the junior girls U12 doubles, only three teams are entered: Julia Ishikawa and Tania Tan; sisters Liza and Catherine Atalig, and Grace Choi and Malika Miyawaki. In the boys division, Ken Song and Tony Kim will face Michael Jones and Steven Goodwin, while Haruya Eda and Vincent Tudela will take on Clayton Izuka and Alex Park.

2012 DLX/Miller Lite League Playoffs

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Sunrisers' Jawn Joyner, left, goes up for a shot against SCS' Jun Pantaleon during their game in the first round of the playoffs in the 2nd Domino Lux International Fraternity Basketball Invitational Friendship League last Monday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

The Sunrisers' Josh Sablan, right, dribbles past SCS' Rocyl Ritual.

SCS' Jessie Mina goes for an underneath shot against the Sunrisers' Mel Manibusan, right, and Josh Sablan.

SCS' Jack Lizama pulls up for a jumper against the Sunrisers' Jawn Joyner.

Andhok's Grille's Mike Umali drives against Mobil's Gyles Ruluked.

Mobil's Gyles Ruluked is defended by two Andhok's Grille players.

Shirley's Bruce Berline, right, and Yosh Gabaldon trap Blue Haus' Elmer Esdrelon at the baseline.

Blue Haus' Junar Guiab, right, escapes the defense of Shirley's Bruce Berline from the sideline.

QQ Rent A Car's Dan Mateo drives against Crystal Pure's Mike Cruz.

Blue Haus' Mike Cruz goes up for a hook shot against QQ Rent A Car's Rolly Paraiso.

Saipan Tribune
Sports

QQ, Blue Haus complete semis cast

QQ Rent A Car's Wowie Abuel, left, and Rolly Paraiso try to steal the ball away from Crystal Pure's Sonny Lerio during the fourth quarter of their playoff game in the DLX/Miller Lite caging last Wednesday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

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REPORTER

QQ Rent A Car and Blue Haus outclassed separates playoff foes last Monday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court to notch the last two semis tickets in the 2nd Domino Lux International Fraternity Basketball Invitational Friendship League.

Blue Haus played in the first game and dominated Shirley's Coffee Shop, 72-60, while QQ Rent A Car slipped past Crystal Pure/Mekeni Abe in overtime in the second game, 78-75.

Elgene Mangali top-scored for QQ with his 24 points, but it was Rolly Paraiso's hustle on the boards and daredevil drives all throughout the game that saved his team from elimination.

Paraiso made the last basket for QQ in regulation, putting his team on top, 68-66, with 14.1 seconds left on the clock. Crystal Pure sued for time and when the game resumed, Sonny Lerio took an early shot beyond the arc and missed.

Fortunately for Crystal Pure, it retained possession as in the battle for the long rebound, a QQ player touched the ball last before the leather rolled out to the right sideline.

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Ol'Aces still unbeaten in Seniors

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REPORTER

Top-ranked Docomo Pacific Ol'Aces triumphed over second place Juan Santiago's Jets II, 12-7, as the Senior Division of the 2012 Saipan Little League continued last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The win stretched Ol'Aces' streak to seven games, while Jets II absorbed just its second loss of the season.

Also on Saturday, IT&E Fielders (5-2) steamrolled the DPS Dare Program Enforcers (0-5), 20-5, while Jets II (6-2) bounced back last Tuesday with a 15-4 shellacking over the Marianas Cable Vision Rep. Ramon S. Basa-Frederick P. Deleon Guerrero Kagman Lions (2-5).

In the Big Division, IT&E Fielders (4-2) held off the top-ranked Docomo Pacific Ol'Aces (6-2), 4-3, last April 5, and the Paradise Island Animal Hospital Hustlers (4-3) routed the Sen. Ralph Torres-Rep. Ramon S. Basa-Frederick P. Deleon Guerrero Kagman Lions (0-6), 17-6, last April 3.

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WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Jets II southpaw Jeffrey Lizama deals a pitch in Tuesday's Senior League matchup against the Kagman Lions at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Southern poses big threat to MHS

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
High school students compete in the 1,500m qualifying race for the All Schools meet yesterday at the Oleai Sports Complex.

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REPORTER

Judging from Week 1 results of the qualifiers, Saipan Southern High School will be a big hurdle to Marianas High School's title defense bid in the 2012 McDonald's 2012 PSS/McDonald's All Schools Championship.

The Manta Rays will be a threat to the many-time champions Dolphins in the boys division after the former posted three of the four best records in the qualifying events last week at the Oleai Sports Complex.

In the boys U18 60m run, Southern's Nevin Salem stunned sprinter Beo Ngirchongor, as the former timed in at 7.28 seconds against the latter's 7.29. Another Southern bet, John

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Lee to challenge men's field in PIC tennis

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Former junior player Vivian Lee will be playing in the men's open singles division of the 12th Annual PIC Tennis Championships this weekend at the PIC hard court.

Lee, who took the women's singles doubles last week, teaming up with Thea Minor, will start her campaign in the men's field against 2010 Micronesian Games medalist Bobby Cruz tonight at 7pm.

Other first round matches today are Tim Quan versus Dong Min Lee and Rafael Jones against Russell Buenaventura. Todd Montgomery completes the men's field and drew a bye

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Lee